

SPIN

**SOLDIERS
OF ILL FORTUNE:
DUPED PATRIOTS WHO
DO AMERICA'S DIRTY
WORK IN NICARAGUA**

JOAN JETT

**FINDS THE
PROMISED
LAND**

JULIAN COPE

THE CULT

TRUE

BELIEVERS

ANTIHERO

THE MISSION

PROFESSOR LONGHAIR

CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

TRACEY ULLMAN

WHY MUSIC AND

VEGETABLES DON'T MIX



A full-page advertisement featuring a cowboy on a horse. The cowboy, wearing a light blue shirt, a brown vest, and a wide-brimmed hat, is looking off to the side while holding a lit cigarette. The horse is dark brown with a white blaze on its face. In the lower-left foreground, two packs of Marlboro cigarettes are displayed: a red pack of Marlboro Red and a yellow pack of Marlboro Longhorn 100's. A white rectangular label with handwritten text is placed over the cowboy's midsection. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

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Volume Three Number Two

May 1987

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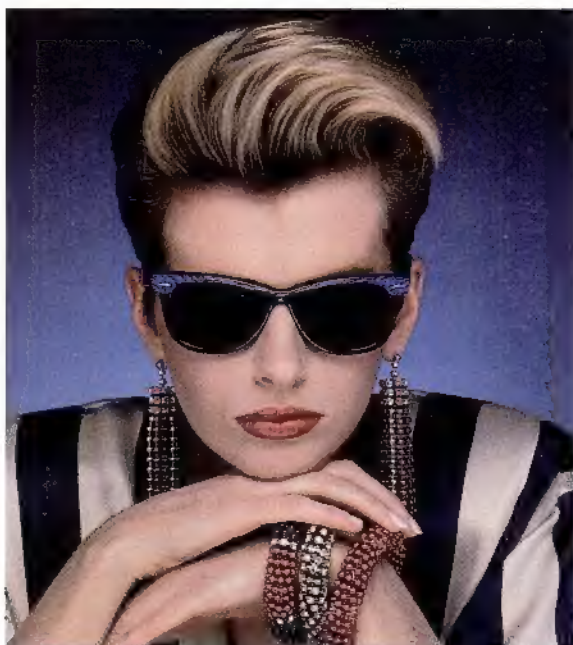
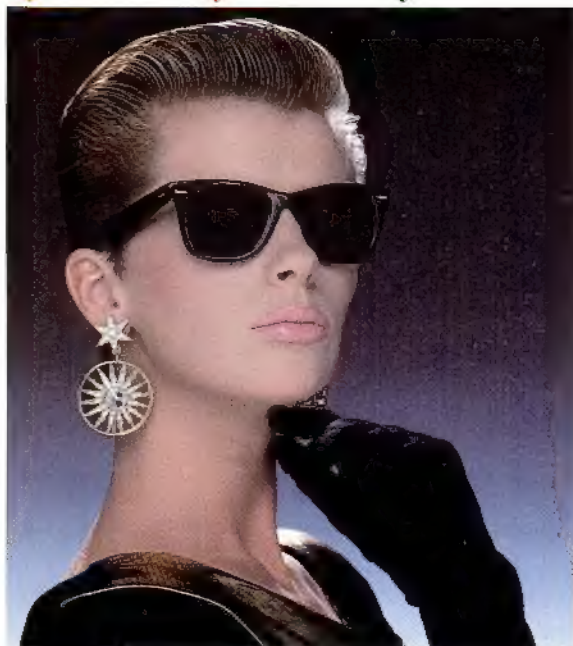
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He had two bikes before this one but this was his first new motor-

cycle. And the great thing about it was it hadn't cost him his life savings.

First stop was Donna's place. Matt accelerated up the street, the hard pulling torque pushing him to the back of the seat.

Donna was waiting on the porch when he pulled up. Matt sat perfectly balanced, barely 26 inches from the ground. Donna climbed on board. He gave the throttle a twist and off they shot into the twilight, headed for the beach,

where friends get together talking about anything and everything. Tonight it was who might get a ride on Matt's new Savage.

He and Donna got off the bike and Matt couldn't help but like what he saw: his Savage 650 loaded with chrome. Chrome spokes, headlight and fender rails. Chrome battery cover, shocks, and mirrors. He smiled. The ocean sand and his Savage looked great together.

Beauty and the beach.

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TOP SPIN

When a scandal breaks, it's like watching cockroaches scurry from a disturbed hiding place. The Iran-contra scandal, which is still being swept out, was a veritable breeding ground.

One cockroach nobody else seemed to notice, we followed. "Conspiracy of Hopelessness" (page 60), by Dennis Bernstein and Vince Bielski, traces the story of Steven Carr, a loser and a confused idealist who enlisted in the "North network" of covert agents supporting the contras in Nicaragua. Our story tells how he and other mercenaries operated on the border of Nicaragua, and how they ferried in arms from Miami and smuggled huge shipments of cocaine into America on the return trip. According to several key figures in our investigation, the CIA, in order to insure the smoothness and secrecy of arms shipments, made pacts with major drug smugglers like George Morales, now in jail in Miami.

Inadvertently, Steven Carr's impatience to get into a firefight bungled the operation, and he was arrested and jailed in Costa Rica. Fearful that he was going to be killed in prison and realizing that he'd been abandoned by the CIA, he talked to the press and to congressional investigators. After a year in jail, he returned to the States and fled to L.A. In December, just before he was expected to testify in front of a grand jury, he died under mysterious circumstances.

What's happening in Nicaragua is not just a scandal, it's a war crime. Words like "fiasco" don't evoke what's going on here. Obsessive concentration on how Reagan is handling this and whether he can "rebound" is hardly the point. On the one hand our government is giving arms to a nation, Iran, that has openly terrorized us; on the other hand it juggles the fates of Central American countries as if they were tennis balls and risks committing America to another completely pointless war.

And yet we're letting everyone get away with it. I read somewhere that America apparently accepts this horror show more than it did Watergate because Watergate was a domestic problem and Iran-Nicaragua is a screw-up of foreign policy. Which is like being more outraged by the man who slapped your wife because he lives in the neighborhood than the man who kidnapped and raped her, but lives abroad.

One source, a mercenary inside the North network, told our reporters that Steven Carr was the sort of man they *didn't* want with them, because his gung-ho naiveté was dangerous. And he did precisely what everyone was afraid he'd do: mess up. In the end, Carr may be the broken link which disentangles the chain of this operation. But what will we do once we've

dismantled it? Will we do anything besides somebody making a movie and everyone else going to see it, to nod mutely and understandingly at each other? For aren't movies, after all, the ultimate absolution for our society, the patient absorption of whatever failure and the forgiving of whatever sin, the defining of all mistakes and, finally, the pardoning of all consequences?

Not that the best ones aren't realistic. Cambodia in *The Killing Fields* and Vietnam in *Platoon* are accurately portrayed. Watching *Platoon*, for instance, you feel not so much as if you were there, but one of the returned vets here, whose memories are saturated in imprecise recollection and vivid horror. But *Platoon*—maybe because it is so realistic, its detail having overwhelmed pathos—doesn't give us a sense of what's wrong with our world that such a nightmare could happen. The causes have been forgiven and so forgotten, and the clumsiness of their lessons erased from the requirements of experience. Movies seem to have become a sacrament for a society that has become intellectually pagan.

This is no more the fault of moviemakers than reliance on painkillers is the fault of the manufacturer. If the general anaesthetizing of the world's pain to the point where it is barely noticeable and no longer meaningful was the fault of moviemakers, we would proceed to the altar with our soundless mouths open for the blanched host of a movie about that. Movies have become our collective, surrogate consciences and we have built in a moral loophole. They are no longer just cathartic, we expect them to serve as instant exorcisms too.

As a society, we seem to have lost our sense of outrage and our ability to criticize ourselves. We regard the Contragate debacle like a slowly unfolding soap opera—interest even jumped at the introduction of the beautiful Fawn Hall, Ollie North's secretary, and then subsided as the novelty wore off, just as with the introduction of fresh characters in the daytime soaps. Many editorialists write about it not only in the same sort of easygoing way as they wrote about the TV series *Amerika*, but in the same tone, as if it were a competing, more expensive serial.

We'd better recover our sense of outrage and punish the lawbreakers for their private warmongering. It's not enough to come out of a theater screaming in pain from seeing *Platoon*, no matter how morally cleansing that might feel. Instead, we'd better start screaming in indignation about Nicaragua, before we become the stars of that movie ourselves.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.



Top left: The Costa Rican prison where American mercenary Steven Carr was held (p. 60); top right: the late Professor Longhair in a cool jacket; center: Julian Cope; Bottom: on tour with the True Believers.

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POINT BLANK



David Michael Kennedy

What've they contributed to the history of music? The Beasties (L-R) MCA, Mike D, and Ad-Rock.

Dr. Ruth would never approve!

Regarding your interview with Mick Hucknall (March), I wonder how many other pop stars share his archaic and dangerously naive attitude toward condoms during this alarming era of AIDS. Everyone who hasn't been living in a cave for the past five years knows the only methods that will insure not transmitting the disease—for heterosexuals as well as homosexuals—are: total abstinence, mutual monogamy, and condoms. If Hucknall doesn't subscribe to either of the first two methods, he'd damn well better give serious consideration to the third. The life he saves could be his own. Until a cure is found for this dreaded disease, I wonder how many musicians, especially those with Hucknall's complacent attitude, won't be around in five years—or even two? And a word of advice to any potential (and current) groupies: Think twice, ladies. What he doesn't know could kill you.

S.E. Wilson
Gettysburg, PA

Everything you always wanted to know . . .

I haven't heard anything lately about the people listed below. Can you give us an update on what they are up to and whereabouts they are living? I am sure other readers would be interested. [Our answers are in italics below.]

- 1) Glen Matlock of Sex Pistols and Rich Kids—Played in Iggy Pop's band on *Soldier* in 1980. Reprised Sex Pistols tunes for Sid & Nancy last year.
- 2) Claude Bessy, aka "Kickboy Face," of Catholic Discipline—Now a U.K. journalist.
- 3) Jimmy Pursey of Sham 69—Became a solo artist. Still making records and playing occasional gigs.
- 4) Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex—Married. Became a Hare Krishna around 1980. Released a solo EP in '86.
- 5) Viv Albertine, Ari Up, Tessa, and Palmolive of the Slits—Ari joined New Age Steppers in '80–81 and is now retired. Palmolive joined the Raincoats, now defunct. SPIN was unable to trace Viv and Tessa.
- 6) Alice Bag of the Alice Bag Band—Married. Lives in L.A.
- 7) Ian McKay of Minor Threat—Continues to run Dischord records in Washington, DC. Just released a single with fellow ex-MT drummer Jeff Nelson under the name Egg Hunt.

Kristina Ferrandino,
Norwalk, CT.

May 87

le on

time journalists and other writers gave performers a break if they are not doing something wonderful every second. While no one is totally an innovator, it is the ability of one person to expand on an idea that makes him an artist. Unlike many performers, Bowie has never been overexposed. He has always been changing and because of this, loyal fans will never tire of him. Bowie has demonstrated that he is a fine actor and songwriter many times. As far as Hollywood being concerned that he has no heterosexual sex appeal, they have got to be kidding! I know a lot of women (including myself) who would totally disagree!

Nancy Jacobs
New Orleans, LA

Bob & Doug McKenzie's American cousins

I don't want to sound like a real dick or anything, but I've been reading your magazine since before *Terrapin Station* came out and you guys haven't written any articles on the Dead. This is pretty uncool, you dudes. I hope you can do something on them even though Jerry's in a coma and Bob broke his leg. Also, could you get ahold of some acid and send me some?

Paul King
Saratoga Springs, NY

P.S. I just got a scale, so if you cats write a story I'll send you some killer bud.

You recently received a letter in my name asking asinine questions about when the Dead are going to be in SPIN and why you haven't reviewed any albums and if you would send me some acid and bullshit like that. I didn't write that shit. My roommate did. Too much time on his hands. He thinks Nick Rhodes of Duran Duran is God. I wouldn't send you a letter asking for more Dead articles or to see if you would review *Terrapin Station*. Anyway, we like your reviews of the new bands like Scratch Acid and Flaming Lips. We wouldn't even have heard of them if we hadn't read the articles.

Paul King
Saratoga Springs, NY

[Ed. Note: You two sound like prime candidates for SPIN's staff. Look us up after your release. With our third year blasting off, we hope to live up to your dubious expectations of us . . . we think.]

Letters

Edited by Karen J. Dolan

There's a Beast in my coffee!

I'm really disappointed in your choice of the Beastie Boys for the cover of your magazine (March '87). In the past you've always chosen someone (or a group) who's at least half-serious about making music and has made some contribution to music. Oh well, I got the last laugh as I tossed your magazine with the Beastie Boys' ugly mugs face-down in yesterday's coffee grounds, knowing that someday these guys will be rotting away in Trend-Music Hell with all sorts of breakdance bands, disco dudes, and many more.

Bryan Bassett
Lexington, KY

Beasties are go!

Bizarre. Happening. Hilarious. Def. Ridiculous. Intellectually stimulating. (wait . . . leave that in). Beasties. Holiday Inn. Wild. Thank you.

Ginny Fanthorne
Ottawa, Ontario

Beasties are no!

Your decision to put a white crew on the cover of your magazine as SPIN's front page presentation of hip-hop betrays 1) the inherent phoniness of your "alternative" stance, 2) your lack of facility with nascent black musical forms, and 3) your own racism. American musical history is running over with contradictions. One just hopes that those of us who watched this music (rap, hip-hop) grow off the sidewalk will remember that, despite thousands of recordings, concerts, and park jams by individuals who were and are far more innovative, creative, and black than the Beastie Boys, the first rap crew on SPIN's cover was not only white, but white-faced. To paraphrase one Howard Tom Parker story of black American music. It's an old, tired story, it's an untrue story, and a magazine of SPIN's caliber is capable of much, much more.

Harry Allen
Freeport, NY

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FLASH

ANDEAN QUEEN

Yma Sumac is your average five-octave Inca Princess. At the peak of her career, she performed with volcanoes exploding at her feet while dancing Incas worshipped her. In the late '50s she stopped recording—sang for Khrushchev in 1962, then all but disappeared. Now Sumac has returned to the limelight, a place where she is very much at home. In 1950, Yma Sumac played the Hollywood Bowl. She was an overnight sensation.

Yma's royal Incan background is sketchy, at best. She is descended from Atahualpa, the last Inca king, who was executed by Francisco Pizarro. That's on her mom's side of the family. A rumor was started that Yma Sumac had inverted her real name—Amy Camus—and invented her past. That Yma Sumac was really from Brooklyn. Neither story has been proven. Or disproven.

Ah, but her voice. Yma Sumac's voice comes from no human place. It rumbles and swells. It is Protean—one moment it is an earthquake; the next, a birdcall, a growling animal. It is a voice beyond words. "As a child, I thought that all of nature, including all kinds of animals, were my audience," she says. "I learned something from them. In *Forest Creatures* (Capitol) I sing, but I blend it with very strange sounds."

Sumac is on a cabaret whistlestop tour. Three weeks in New York, then Chicago, then San Francisco. The David Letterman show. Capitol issuing Yma's back catalog on CD. Capitol and MCA dueling to sign her.

Kenneth Anger asked Yma to play Pola Negri in the film of *Hollywood Babylon*. "He say, 'You are my Polita Negri!'" says Yma. B-52 Kate Pierson wants Yma to work on her solo album. Hal Willner, who produced *Lost in the Stars*, a Kurt Weill tribute album, is assembling a Walt Disney tribute album; Van Dyke Parks will produce Yma's track. It is "I Wonder," appropriately, from *Sleeping Beauty*. There will be an Yma Sumac video. A 12" dance single. What is all this?

Yma accepts it calmly. It is her due. She expects no less. Her demeanor is never questioned. Onstage, Yma is regal, intimidating even. At her New York show a man at a ringside table laughs. Yma stops the show and invites him to leave. She used to wear her gold crown onstage. Now she leaves it at home.

Yma has homes in Spain, the Andes, and California. She embroiders, reads metaphysics, and answers fan mail. She writes letters to her only son, a 28-year-old engineering student. She hasn't seen him in 12 years. "But he calls every Saturday. And he never forgets."

Yma loves horses. And dogs. She had a dog once, but it died. She wants another one. Yma doesn't think she's a good cook. Yma likes to paint. When Yma told her mother she wanted to be a singer, "she spanked me. For the first and only time in my life."

Brooklyn oughta make Yma Sumac an honorary citizen. She is thoughtful. "Artists don't have countries. All the world is their country. I belong to the world."

—Sukey Pett

Yma Sumac,
Mister X comics,
The Mission,
Polkacide,
Europe,
Prince vs.
Jimmy Jam &
Terry Lewis,
Product News,
Missed
Information,
Ori Hofmekler,
Exposé

Edited by
John Leland


GREGG ALLMAN LIVES UP TO HIS LEGEND! "I'm No Angel."

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ROUGH
TRADE

COMMITTING POLKACIDE



Mark Leibel/Artist Publications

And I'm Stan Shmenge: Polkacide and their pals have a barrel of fun.

Face it: polka is hip. It comes from an underdeveloped country and it's real easy to dance to—just look at who can dance to it. And right on the cutting edge of this most misunderstood of polyrhythms is San Francisco's Polkacide, America's premier hardcore polka band. Imagine, if you will, 12 Frank Yankovics on speed. Not content to be a one-joke band, Polkacide is a one-joke art band; if you don't believe it, check out their lovely "John Cage Polka."

Polkacide introduced the ultimate Slavic fashion accessory (naugahosen), was voted both best and worst band in the Bay Area in 1985, and appeared on the Miss Nude America Pageant. These guys are cooler than a winter night in Krakow.

They've been around. Ward Abronski honked righteous sax on Flipper's immortal "Sex Bomb" and bassist Alistair Shanks fronts Tragic Mulatto. Hayok Kay may be the planet's only female Korean polka drummer. And father-son combo Dudzo and John "The Polish-American Elvis" Wartniak are real Poles.

SPIN: What do you look for in a polka partner?

All: Beer.

Dudzo: Massive thighs and huge lungs.

Hayok: A big dick with bruises on it.

Ward: My dick.

SPIN: Who's your favorite Polish person?

Alistair: Simon Bolivar.

Ward: Me.

SPIN: What's your biggest influence?

All: Alcohol.

SPIN: How do you know when you've had enough?

John: When you can't stand up and there's blood on the trumpet.

When you're bored with b-boys, fed up with Fela, and tired of that same old Zulu jive, it's good to know there's a music that can satisfy your thirst and your limited brain power. Roll out the barrel, y'all. —Amy Linden

TWEEZERS OF THE GODS

EUROPE CREATE LITE-METAL THUNDER

What has heavy metal come to? First we're force-fed that New Jersey "metal" band with their No. 1 album, video, singles, and haircuts. And now along comes Europe. Out of the water and onto your baby sister's stereo.

Since the PMRC came along, metal bands just haven't been the same. The guys in Europe don't worship the devil, spout misogyny, or perform druidic rites onstage. They do come from Sweden, dye their hair blond (the brunets, anyway), have good skin and white teeth, and smile a lot. In today's metal band, the guitarist leaves because, according to singer Joey Tempest, "he didn't like the photo sessions and promotions and things like that, it wasn't what he wanted to do." Somehow I think Black Sabbath never had it like this.

But then, Sabbath also never had MTV. Following Bon Jovi's success, Europe have placed their video for "The Final Countdown" in MTV's heavy rotation, and subsequently risen higher in the *Billboard* charts than any Swedish act before them—including Abba. The band may never get played on *Heavy Metal From Hell*, but they aren't exactly languishing in obscurity, either. With this New Metal, unlike the old, inoffensiveness is a prime virtue.

The other thing about this New Metal is

the way that virtue gets rewarded. Europe recently played a giant European arena tour, and packed the houses with females. Joey says the mix was about 50/50, "but I think somehow the girls are getting into the arena first ■ they are standing in the front. I don't know why." I'd wager a guess. Could it be the high gloss on your lips, the way your hair is permed just right, or—this is just a shot in the dark—the way it looks like you don't wear any underwear onstage?

In fairness, Europe never claimed to be a heavy metal band. They just happened to have long hair, break on MTV's metal half-hour, use some pyro in their stage show, and do a little head-banging in their video. And even if their album, *The Final Countdown*, is longer on keyboards than guitar, there's ■ denying its catchiness. "Hard-edged melodic rock," Joey calls it, and even if it's not your idea of hard, it sure is melodic.

Europe now have gold records in 14 European countries, and "The Final Countdown" single reached No. 1 in 17. And like any good multinational, they're huge in Japan. Japanese children amuse themselves with dolls of the five band members, and Europe is one of the country's 10 biggest foreign acts. But then, in Japan, Charlie Sexton is God.

—Alexandria



Courtesy Epic Records

Valhalla, I am coming: Joey Tempest of Europe.



(L-R) Prince, Jimmy Jam, and Terry Lewis: stocks and hands.

A - The S.O.S. Band's *Just the Way You Like* album and title single both reach No. 6 on the black charts.

■ - Alexander O'Neill's "Innocent" goes No. 10 black.

C - Cherrelle's "Saturday Love," Force M.D.'s "Tender Love," and Janet Jackson's "What Have You Done for Me Lately" all break the black Top 10. Jackson's *Control* goes No. 1 black.

D - Control goes No.1, "What Have You Done for Me Lately" enters the pop Top 10, while Alexander O'Neil's "What's Missing" and Jackson's "Nasty" crack the black Top 10.

E - "When I Think of You," the third single from *Control*, goes No. 1 pop. Human League's "Human" enters the Top 10 in both the black and pop charts.

F - "Human" goes No. 1 pop.

■ - "Control" becomes the fourth Top 10 single from the LP, *Control*.

(Points awarded for singles and albums in the Top 10 of the black and pop charts, with bonuses given for weeks at No. 1.)

—Michael Fernandez

Time was when the only things a hip young guy would put in his boxer shorts were himself and a rolled-up sock. But that was before "safe sex" became the buzzword of the age. Never one to ignore a good slogan—she started the fashion for emblazoning them in huge type across T-shirts—British designer Katherine Hamnett has now come up with AIDS-resistant underwear. Made from silk and available either in plain white or black-and-white polka dot, the boxers feature a front pocket tailored to accommodate one or more condoms. (All-night lovers who require five or six should wear two pairs of shorts.) Hamnett is currently preparing a line of designer condoms to accompany them. Meanwhile the boxers should become available here sometime this spring. Expect a price tag of around \$50.

The relationship between rock 'n' roll and ice cream is presently undocumented. All that's known for sure is that reggae, bluegrass, and soft-rock fans eat nearly five times as much of it as aficionados of speed metal and hardcore. Speculation also exists that Deadheads make more midnight trips to the icebox than all other social groups combined. With the introduction of Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia ice cream, they can now turn a vice into an ideological cause. An unashamed tribute to B&J's favorite band, Cherry Garcia is a velvety mixture of vanilla ice cream, cherries, and chocolate chips. The cherries, naturally, are stoned. What about the people who eat them? "We do know that a significant amount of our ice cream is consumed when people are stoned, usually between one and three AM," Ben explained. "That wasn't a consideration when we were preparing this one. It's just that ice cream in general tastes really good when you're stoned."

Enough of that! In our enduring commitment to hippie collectivism, SPIN Ices and Sherberts (in association with Guccione Nuts & Sauces Inc.) has already ripped off the idea. Our first ten flavors are ready to roll: 1. Oreo Speedwagon 2. Pecanned Heat 3. Mint DeVille 4. Mango Jerry 5. Roky Road Erickson 6. Sam Cookie Crunch 7. Bon-Bon Jovi 8. Gregg Almond Fudge 9. Philip Glacée 10. We're working on it.

—

INFORMATION

MISS

Condom-ments: Ever concerned about their well-being, the **Beastie Boys** have stipulated in their tour contract that a **rainbow assortment of condoms** be provided in their dressing room before every show. The safe sex rock 'n' roll juggernaut rolls on. ▲ Everything seemed to be cozy. After meeting with members of the **African National Congress**, which had censured the *Graceland* album, **Paul Simon** announced that the ANC would soon retract its criticisms. It didn't. According to Dali Tambo, son of ANC president Oliver Tambo, "Paul Simon has **broken the cultural boycott** and in so doing, has made a mockery of the suffering of the people of South

Africa. He has added further insult to injury by misinforming journalists here and abroad about the attitude of the ANC and the people of South Africa, whom he has at no stage consulted." ▲ Purchasers of **Lawrence Welk's** long-awaited *The World's Greatest Polkas* CD were delighted to find that they'd actually come home with **mislabeled** copies of the soundtrack to *Sid & Nancy*. The happy miscue might have

gone unnoticed, but a few **spoilsports** returned their copies, ruining the surprise for everybody else. ▲ **Willie Dixon**, bad dude and composer of such PMRC-approved classics as "I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man," "Back Door Man," and "I Just Want to Make Love to You," has **settled out of court** in his suit against **Led Zeppelin**. Dixon claimed that Zep's "Whole Lotta Love" **ripped off** his "You Need Love." Without a court ruling, now we'll never know whether Zeppelin was **100-percent groundbreakingly original**. ▲ **Sonny Bono** has announced that he will run for mayor of Palm Springs, California. His platform? To make Palm Springs "the **glamour capital** of the world." Alarmed residents of the current glamour capital, Bayonne, New Jersey, are said to be selling their homes en masse, before the real estate values plummet. ▲ **Stevie Wonder** will refuse all invitations to perform in Arizona until the state restores Martin Luther King's birthday as an official holiday. New governor Evan Mecham **rescinded** the holiday this year as one of his **first acts** in office. ▲ Demonstrating their **keen eye** for a figurehead with whom the populace will identify, the West German government has adopted **Kool Moe Dee's** rap, "Go See the Doctor," for its AIDS public service announcements. Will the West German masses suddenly practice safe sex just because they've heard Kool Moe Dee's spiel, "The poontang was dope and you know that I rocked her/But three days later, go see the doctor"? ▲ **Alfred Lion**, who founded the legendary Blue Note jazz label in 1939, has died at the age of 78. ▲ **A-ha** beat out stiff competition and eked out a Best Pop Album award at this year's Spellemannsprisen, Norway's answer to the Grammys (only blonder). It is estimated that **one out of every five** Norwegians owns an a-ha album. ▲ Influential **sexual role**

models the **Fat Boys** have jumped onto the rubber bandwagon with their own condom anthem, "Protect Yourself." The condom, the song says, has "been around since Adam, but kept out of view." Good thing it was kept out of Adam's view! ▲ Twelve years after releasing what was at the time the **best-selling** record ever, **Peter Frampton** has been reduced to playing in David Bowie's band on the upcoming tour. ▲



Siouxsie Sioux, whose spiky tresses inspired a generation of haircuts, has finally cut her hair.

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Ori Hofmekler

ROGUES' GALLERY

Whether recasting Lee Iacocca as Bruce Springsteen, imagining George Bush as Boy George, or portraying Jerry Falwell as God, Ori Hofmekler's paintings have the resonance of all good satire: they reshape the way in which we see his subjects. In *Hofmekler's Gallery*, a collection of his recent work (to be published in May by Times Books/Random House), his subjects range across the political spectrum, from Mario Cuomo and Jesse Jackson to Pat Robertson and Ed Meese. His satirical methods also vary; what unites them is Hofmekler's gift for cunning juxtapositions. He doesn't merely portray Jerry Falwell as God; he portrays him as a parody of Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*. The result is both a clever, eye-catching pastiche and a sharp commentary on Falwell's own overblown self-conception.

"The thing is, I don't believe that anyone really cares about either art or politics," he says. "I have to give a very strong showing to get people's attention."

A 35-year-old, Israeli-born

workaholic, Hofmekler abandoned a career in fine art "in order to deal with real life." A major figure in Europe, his work has slowly gained prominence in America, where he now lives full-time. Still, many U.S. publications are wary of his more graphic works, such as the picture of Margaret Thatcher sprouting a pair of balls. "I now impose an invisible red line on my ideas," he says. "I always try to touch it. If I cross it, I know I'll be censored." To get ideas, he spends five or six hours daily watching movies, scanning ads, researching pop culture, in addition to charting the progress of politicians. The fact that politicians are increasingly eager to present themselves as pop figures means that Hofmekler has to stay alert, ahead of the game. The death threats from the followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini—whom he showed sitting on the toilet—and the law suit from Germany's Green Party—he presented its leader in the nude—were signs of his triumph. His darkest hour came when Ronald Reagan wrote a thank-you note for being recast as Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky II*. —Eric King

MIAMI THRICE

EXPOSÉ RIDE THE NEW MIAMI WAVE

In 1985, former Miami DJ Lewis A. Martineé wrote a song called "Point of No Return" and produced a rhythm track for it. He assembled a trio of session singers, dubbed them Exposé, cut the record, and released it on his own Panthera label. It was a different kind of dance record: faster, lighter, with a lot of high hat and a taste of the Latin rhythms of '70s disco. Among the Latin teenagers of Miami and subsequently New York, it was an instant local hit.

If it had come out a year earlier, "Point of No Return" would probably have been just another regional hit. But in dance music, timing is everything. And in Miami, in 1985, the record became an early show of strength for the audience that was on its way to becoming the dominant taste-maker in dance music. Bands like Nu Shooz and the Pet Shop Boys had hits in Miami a year before they broke out nationally. At press time, four of the Top Ten 12-inch singles bear the "Miami Sound" trademark.

The unlikely catalyst for the resurgent Miami scene, moribund since the decline of disco groups like K.C. and the Sunshine Band and Peter Brown, has been the raising of the drinking age to 21. Latin teens, excluded from discos, flock to juice bars, where the dancing is intense and the music matches both the frenetic energy and romantic innocence of their adolescent mating rituals. But if the music sounds bubblegum, the kids aren't necessarily soft. At clubs like Hopenite and Skylight Express, 16-year-old coke dealers cruise the parking lots in Mercedeses and Maseratis with license plates reading IM DEF or IL MACHO. Some of the clubs take Polaroids of the rowdier boys so security can spot them if they try to sneak in. Girls often swipe the pictures



Chris Collins

Exposé (L-R) Gioia Carmen, Ann Carliss, and Jeannette Jurado.

and trade them like bubblegum cards.

The scene, paralleled by Latin teens in New York, quickly broke out of the clubs. In Miami, Hot 105-FM built a radio format around young Miami groups like Exposé, Miami Sound Machine, Nice & Wild, Voice in Fashion, Exotic Erotic, Sweet Sensation, and Company II. New York followed with Hot 103-FM and its own Miami-sounding groups: TKA, Nocera, Hanson and Davis, and Nayobe. The white Minneapolis group Information Society, whose rock indie label Twin Tone couldn't give their record away anywhere else, found themselves with the No. 1 record in Miami and an enormous Latin following in New York.

On the crest of this wave, Exposé's "Point of No Return" became a national No. 1 dance single. Martineé signed the group to Arista with an unusual proviso: he had to replace the singers. After a nationwide talent search, which netted only one Miamiian, he had a new Exposé. "Lewis never intended for [the original lineup] to be an actual group," says new member Jeannette Jurado. "He wrote and produced the track and had them do the vocals. They weren't really interested in a musical career."

So far, Martineé and the new Exposé have released an LP and one single, "Come Go With Me." The song hit No. 7 on the dance charts and crossed over to the pop Top 20. But, wary of the hype that never translated to sales for House and Go Go music, Martineé downplays the idea of a musical movement. "There's just a lot of good dance music down here," he says. "Anyone who is saying they planned it all, or saw it coming, is lying."

—Scott Mabee

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JULIAN COPE

The gospel according to Saint Julian:
People who are not horny make half-assed records.

Artists have an obligation to serve as cultural proxies, and if that means substantial pharmaceutical self-abuse, so be it.

It's totally cool to have hang-ups and really important to be tense.

Pere Ubu, the Stooges, and the MC5 were brilliant.

In the beginning, there was Liverpool. Not the Merseyside cradle of '60s beat groups, but the artificial 1977-79 mecca that begat such musical catalysts as Echo and the Bunnymen, The Teardrop Explodes, OMD, and Dalek I Love You. (It would also produce Dead or Alive and Frankie Goes to Hollywood, but every cultural upheaval has its residual trade-off.) The renaissance began when Julian Cope, a transplanted Welshman, formed a band with his friends Ian McCulloch and Pete Wylie. As Cope remembers it, "Wylie said, 'Let's call ourselves the Crucial Three—we're going to be the most legendary group in the world!'" They never quite made it. The Crucial Three lasted for a few rehearsals and numerous arguments before the three went their separate ways. Within a year McCulloch had formed Echo and the Bunnymen; a couple of years later Wylie was at the head of Wah! Heat. Cope, meanwhile, had founded The Teardrop Explodes, an often oblique but attractive pop band that, by his own account, "took ridiculous amounts of drugs. When the Teardrops and the Bunnymen started, Mac and I wanted to be absolute megastars. We wanted to be the biggest cult heroes in the world, to be millionaires, to look brilliant, and to be total bastards."

But that was all a long time ago. In the eight years that followed, the Bunnymen have gone forth and prospered, and the rechristened Mighty Wah! has become a mainstay of the British independent scene. The Teardrop Explodes put out two albums and split up in 1983. Having met his American wife-to-be, Cope decided he was unsatisfied with his professional situation. "Halfway through recording the third album I realized I was still in charge, and all I had to do was say no. I woke up one morning and Dorian and I went home. I rung up from Tamworth and said, 'I think we've split up.'"

Cope went solo. Working with the Teardrops' drummer and a new guitarist, he took a batch of songs he'd written for the band and recorded *World Shut Your Mouth* (which doesn't contain the song of the same

name, as he hadn't written it at the time). *World* offers relatively upbeat, idiosyncratic neo-psychedelia. His second solo album, *Fried*, released in 1984, is a tougher chew. "*Fried* was written in about a month of total depression. The reason I'm like this"—meaning sane, coherent, and healthy—"is because I wrote *Fried* and came out of it. If I'd tried to do an album that was really together, I'd still be in a semi-fucked-up situation." Cope's logic may be obscure, but he does make sense.

After *Fried*, Julian did no gigs or further recording until the middle of last year: "I was Mr. Paranoid—I never opened the door." The present activity of this popstar phase of his career got underway when he recorded demos of several new songs, including "World Shut Your Mouth," which recycled not only the LP title but two out of three chords to "Louie, Louie" as well.

To Cope's chagrin, "my A&R man said, 'These songs are shit, go away and write some more.'" He declined, and was soon free to sign with Island, who liked the tunes just fine. By the end of last year, "World Shut Your Mouth" hung in the British Top 20 (a 12-inch mini-album, issued in the States, included a neat pair of covers: "Levitator," the 1968 13th Floor Elevators song, and Pere Ubu's odd romantic ode, "Non Alignment Pact"). His next 45, "Trampoline," also did well, setting the groundwork for the album, *Saint Julian*, his most impressive and accessible record yet.

And with the album, of course, a tour. Dressed ominously in black leather for a New York performance, enveloped by the occasional spew of smoke generators, Cope plays very little guitar. Concentrating instead on singing and posing, he rolls out a career retrospective program in a variety of styles that suggests everyone from Donovan to Iggy to the Doors to Echo. Cope's psychedelic sensibility is obvious: songs stretch and writhe with abandon; sounds ebb and flow in the mix in disordered, unsettling fashion. He sings without restraint, seeming only semi-cognizant of the audience. He wraps himself around a custom-built, industrial-strength mike stand contraption with steps built on it.

What the hell is that thing? "We wanted the most low-tech, Luddite thing. We didn't want something that was kind of faggy or too rock 'n' roll. What I like about it is, you can throw any shape you want on it, and whether it looks ugly or beautiful, it's a good shape. A good ugly shape, a good beautiful shape. I've always thought of the mike stand as the altar, and the lectern, and a phallic symbol. It's almost like sucking your own cock onstage."

But sometimes it has been touch and go.

Article by
Ira Robbins

Photography
by Donna Ranieri



Cope is a slithering serpent, alternately lurching out at the audience and resting back, sated.

Asked a few days later about the revision, Cope offers a fascinatingly convoluted explanation. "So much of *Saint Julian* is the idea of newness. I love the idea of the first person to have sex. It's like the Mona Lisa—there was a time when Leonardo sat back and said, 'I think it's finished.' The idea of the long version of 'World Shut Your Mouth' was going into this garden and the idea of everything being so cool that you let certain things go past that are really not good. But when you've got a relationship you think, 'I won't question that bit for a while 'cause this scene's really good.' The long version has got a real shape to it. It's very erotic, isn't it? It keeps building—it's like a massive orgasm!"

Julian Cope has an image problem. With some justification, people often reckon him to be the post-punk answer to Brian Wilson or Syd Barrett—a harmless, drug-addled lunatic with a penchant for inactivity and isolation. With some justification, Cope vehemently disputes the comparison. "However depressed or untogether I've been, I've always been aware of it, and I've written songs that explained those things." Although his ability to function like a normal individual in the world is obvious onstage and off, the acid-casualty rep has proven hard to shake. "I really don't want people saying, 'There's Julian Cope—he's

really off his box.' I've spent the last few years being really together.

"When people expect you to be off your tree all the time, you really straighten out. People are so pleased I'm lucid." In fact, he's not only lucid but extremely intelligent, analytical, and rather charming. Julian Cope fights for the right to be mundane. "Sometimes you just feel bland—everybody does. Sometimes Vincent Van Gogh must have thought, 'I think I want some coffee.' You've got to live day to day."

Cope is admittedly no stranger to controlled substances. "I've taken acid over 150 times. You get so much into your system that you get to a point where you question everything. There's absolutely no way your everyday life is not seething with that questioning and bewilderment. I never advocate drug-taking, but for myself it's all right. Artists have to feel more brittle and tense; they have to be more fucked up. A lot of people enjoy things by proxy—it's a necessity of the world. If everybody goes around out of their minds, nothing gets done. I get paid to be Julian Cope. It's like when you listen to Nick Drake: not everybody wants to be Nick Drake—it's the most tortuous thing you could be—but thank god for his existence."

Through his dedication to psychedelics, Julian Cope has made questioning and bewilderment a veritable

religion. He inhabits an arcane intersection of intelligence and sanity that often resembles idiocy and madness. Through his music, this mundane saint fancies himself a selfless tool of society, somehow serving the greater good by pounding stages like a clown. If that exalts the chosen one and thus dignifies the lot of man on earth, then Julian Cope is a pretty good musician.

With his steel pipe whatchamacallit for assistance, Cope is a slithering serpent, alternately lurching out at the audience and resting back, sated. He's a right poseur, to be sure, but with enough unselfconsciousness to make it more play than pomp. His true dramatic value comes to the fore when the band finally gets around to playing what the audience of MTV kids came to see: "World Shut Your Mouth." Cope begins as an easygoing lounge lilt, sticking to just the verses, teasing the crowd by withholding the anthemic chorus, and threatening to finish it without ever making it sound like the record. After what seems like an eternity, the band accelerates into total rev and runs through the entire number the way it's spozed to be. The result is orgasmic, dizzying. The audience gets just what it wants, delivered in a fashion that makes it seem far more than the obligatory performance of a hit single.

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CAMPER

whole thing



Scott Wippenmont

Camper Van Beethoven took the skinheads bowling and lived to regret it.

When Camper Van Beethoven went on tour with R.E.M. last October, they brought along about two thousand REO Speedwagon backstage passes. "We'd go onstage," remembers bassist Victor Krummenacher, "and like toss 50 of 'em into the crowd, and these kids would start killing each other to get them. And then they'd look at them and go, 'REO Speedwagon?' They'd think I was handing out autographed Peter Buck backstage passes."

"When I first met Michael Stipe," adds band manager Jackson Haring, "I handed him one, and he looked at it and said, 'very funny.' Oops! I guess they probably have a lot more tensions on the road than we do."

"Alastair Crowley declared himself the antichrist and said he was out to destroy Christianity. I think that if we could do one thing, it'd be great if we could destroy forever the whole thing that surrounds rock 'n' roll and rock stars."

—David Lowery

"We all listen to Led Zeppelin. I think that's the one group that everybody likes."

—Victor Krummenacher

The year I began to lose faith in alternative/independent music, I found a band that made bad faith a virtue. Calling themselves Camper Van Beethoven, they arrived in 1985 with an album called *Telephone Free Landslide Victory* that announced itself via a sticker as surrealist, absurdist folk music. It had an acoustic Black Flag song, a bunch of Tex-Mex/Greek/Russian/ska instrumentals, and songs called "Mao Reminisces About His Days in Southern China," "Club Med Sucks," and "Skinhead Stomp."

It seemed terminally hip, a rad way for five guys who talked like Sean Penn in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* to wear their record collections on their sleeves. Fascinating, but still a curio; an aural chocolate sundae for the comic-book collector lurking inside the average underground music fan.

But then it got even hipper. A disarming little sing-along called "Where the Hell Is Bill?" called out the alternative/independent scene and dryly tore it apart. "Maybe he went to get a mo-

Yes sympathizer Jonathan Segel pretends not to be someone pretending to be a rock star.

Article by John Leland

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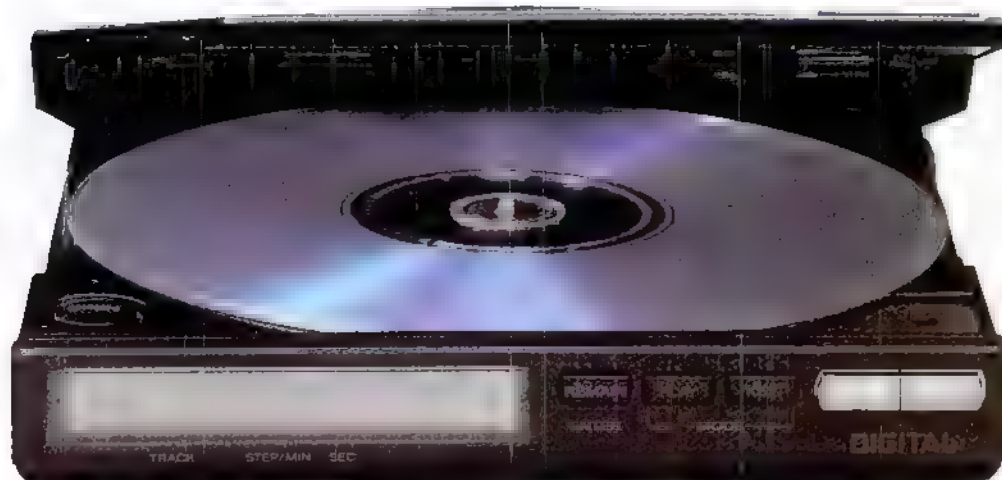
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"College radio and independent labels have just become like the farm leagues. Now you can't buy an independent record and expect it to be adventurous."



Steve Jennings

Roll over, Beethoven; (L-R) Jonathan Segel, Victor Krummenacher, David Lowery, Greg Lisher, Chris Pederson.

hawk," began one verse, "And maybe he went to get some gnarly thrash boots/ Maybe he went to go ride his skateboard/ Maybe he went to see the Circle Jerks." It was an inspired conceptual flimflam: an in-joke about a closed subculture. If you were enough of an insider to get it, then the joke was on you.

They made the joke a step hipper on the non-sequitural "Take the Skinheads Bowling" by withholding the punch line that should have explained the connection between skinheads and bowling. This was a joke about closure that had its own closed syntax; it was its own punch line, and anybody caught identifying with the satire ultimately bore its astringent brunt. Like a tempest in a demitasse, Camper Van Beethoven raised a mannered snarl at the mannerism around them. If this was an alternative band that saw alternative music as a joke, at least they recognized it as a good joke.

I got it: Camper Van Beethoven was a rockin' 'n' rollin' postmodern comedy of manners.

"We were going to write a song called 'I Love Rock and Roll About Rock and Roll,' but we thought that would be getting too weird."

—David Lowery

In 1979, David Lowery was living in the town of Redlands, California, in the desert east of Los Angeles. He'd dropped out of college after one year, and was working in a newspaper mailroom. "I had two hours a day where I did nothing because of some scheduling oversight," he recalls, "and I read Thomas Pynchon all day, among other writers. I was getting really bored.

"The punk rock thing was starting to happen. So I started playing in all these weird, semi-hardcore bands. In Riverside, which is where the local disco was, the only people that were into punk rock were either these kinda weird jock surfer kids who were really into the Orange County scene, or it was like all the junkies and gays. There was a huge dyke punk rock scene in Riverside. I don't know why it was there, but it was really big. I remember meeting Victor, he was in another hardcore band called the Curse. He was about 14 and had big boots that were bigger than his head. He had braces on his teeth. He looked like he was about 12.

"I decided to start this band where nobody was playing their right instruments. We were going to play really simple music, and it was going to be antithetical to what was going on. That idea kind of faded, but we did have a violin player, we had a Christian, we had an acoustic guitar. Most of our songs were sing-alongs. Most of us had long hair, and we were generally regarded as being uncool by the skinheads. But we really knew just as much about their music as they knew about it, plus we knew about other kinds of music."

In 1984, Lowery moved north to Santa Cruz to finish college, persuading Krummenacher and guitarist Chris Molla to join him. They met guitarist, violinist, and Yes sympathizer Jonathan Segel and guitarist Greg Lisher, took a lot of psychedelic drugs, and as a sideline to all of their individual bands, formed Camper Van Beethoven, with Lowery making his debut as frontman. "We were all more serious about the other bands," says Krummenacher, who is now 21 and sports mutton chops the size of actual mutton. "But it just turned out that I knew Bruce [Licher, who runs Independent Project Records], and Bruce was attracted to the Camper material." They recorded *Telephone Free Landslide Victory* for Licher's label.

Q: How many members of R.E.M. does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Two. One to screw it in, one to put on the Robyn Hitchcock record.

Camper Van Beethoven have now made three albums, each a little less ethnic and self-referential and more psychedelic than the last (the second had a grassroots version of Sonic Youth's "I Love Her All the Time"; the third, a straight take on Pink Floyd's "Interstellar Overdrive"). They are by most criteria this year's American independent band to beat. Their last record rose to No. 3 on the *College Music Journal* charts, prompting contract offers from several major labels. Recording for their own Pitch-a-Tent label, they've become fixtures of fanzines and college radio. They're currently about where the Replacements were before *Let It Be*, or where Hüsker Dü was before *New Day Rising*. By pissing on the alternative/independent music scene—in the course of an evening they dish virtually every ranking indie band that isn't called the Butthole Surfers—they've risen to its top.

But the chickens always come home to roost. And as much as the two early joke songs were responsible for the band's success, they've now become a stumbling block. As his girlfriend thumbs through a copy of *Gravity's Rainbow*, Lowery explains: "In people's eyes we're either a very successful one-hit novelty joke band or some kind of acid experimental band. People think, Oh, those guys aren't serious, they're just joking around. We want some rock 'n' roll we can believe in—like the Replacements, like R.E.M. Those guys are living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, they're our gods." We don't do that, because I hate rock 'n' roll. I like some rock songs, but just the whole scene is pretty gross. Being in a rock 'n' roll band is really dumb, I'd like to do something better. I'm not sure we've done anything better yet.

"People tell us we're not serious and write silly lyrics, but I listen to the Sisters of Mercy or New Order or the Swans or Lone Justice—are those bands really serious? Bauhaus—that's the one I'm thinking of—they're a serious band, and I think it's comic. It just seems so fake, it's like a cartoon. I want to destroy that notion of rock 'n' roll seriousness that

makes this guy singing in a weird fake accent all serious and somber about Bela Lugosi's death something to praise. I really wish rock 'n' roll had the same sensibilities and a really developed aesthetic criticism like jazz has. In jazz, sometimes people do joke around and then they get serious, and it doesn't mean that they're a joke band or anything. Rock 'n' roll doesn't have that at all.

"And besides, we aren't always satirical. In retrospect I regret 'Where the Hell Is Bill?' I don't regret 'Take the Skinheads Bowling' because it was just by accident that it talked about pop subculture. Whereas 'Where the Hell Is Bill?' talked directly about pop subculture, and I really don't want to do that. Fellini made movies about making movies, and he stopped after a while. There was a reason why he stopped. We wrote a couple of songs about rock songs and we stopped. And there was very good reason for us to stop. Our big goal in touring was to let people know that we have other songs besides those two."

Camper Van Beethoven has spent eight of the last 12 months on their first national tour, promoting their album the only way an indie band can. A few

weeks of that was with R.E.M., but most was on their own, operating on a shoestring budget with the savvy of an efficient small business. They keep lists of college radio stations and friendly sofas (the unacknowledged sine qua non of underground rock) in every town, carry their own equipment to cut costs, and print Camper Van Beethoven T-shirts at highway reststops to sell at gigs in the evenings.

But for all their efficiency, there are still glitches. Like getting their van searched for drugs at the agricultural checkpoint going into Texas (negative) and then again going out (luckily the cop was willing to overlook a couple of roaches). Or like arriving at Washington, D.C.'s 9:30 Club to find their dressing room filled with drunks. "And this one guy is saying the same thing over and over again," says Lowery, "talking about some Cheap Trick song that he wanted us to play. Over and over and over again. This is what fame gives you: more and more of the audience are just assholes and dumbshits. I asked him politely a few times to leave. Finally something snapped in my head, and I just thought, 'Arrgh, I hate you, you people make life miserable for me, I hate you, and I'm going to exterminate you

guys like red ants.' I threw a beer bottle against the wall and broke it, and started screaming at this guy, and we finally had him thrown out.

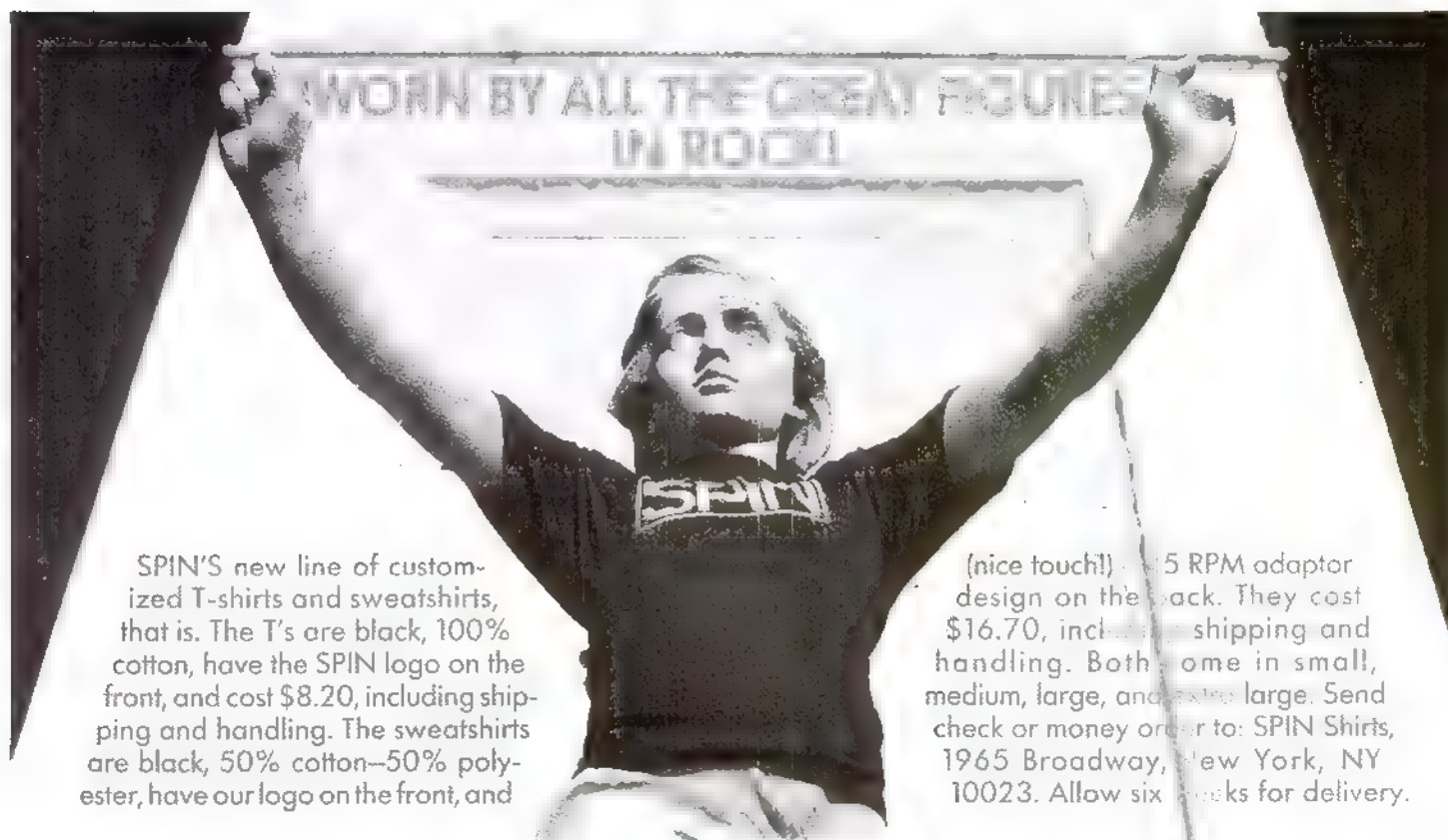
This is why David Lowery says he hates rock 'n' roll. He was alienated and paranoid enough to begin with, without having shit like this happen to him. But as Camper Van Beethoven progresses, this is what they have to look forward to. The curse of the alternative/independent music scene is that it necessarily spreads its supporters too thin. Underground success often means graduating from playing for 25 people who know your music to 300 people who don't.

It is ironic that Camper Van Beethoven, who started out by making underground music about how making underground music was stupid, may soon be in a position to rise above the scene altogether. They're already sensing resentment from below and power lunch invitations from above. Having seen what it's done for the Replacements and Hüsker Dü, they don't seem in any hurry to sign with a major label. They also say they now make about two bucks on every album they sell, and expect to move close to 25,000 on the latest. Which beats the hell out of what

the majors are offering. On the other hand, they have no illusions about the indies. "College radio and independent labels have just become like the farm leagues," says Lowery. "Now you can't buy an independent record and expect it to be adventurous. The only thing you can say about the independent labels is that they have better taste. But politically they're not any better. It's hard for me to take rock music seriously when we seem to have this choice between the AOR scene, which is obviously fucked up for its own reasons, and the underground scene, which is fucked up for other reasons."

"We haven't gotten any more pop," he continues, "definitely not any more mainstream. We just wanted to be this weird garage band and combine a lot of different things and not really be a rock 'n' roll band. And that's what we're going to continue to do. So maybe it doesn't matter what we do, as long as we make good music."

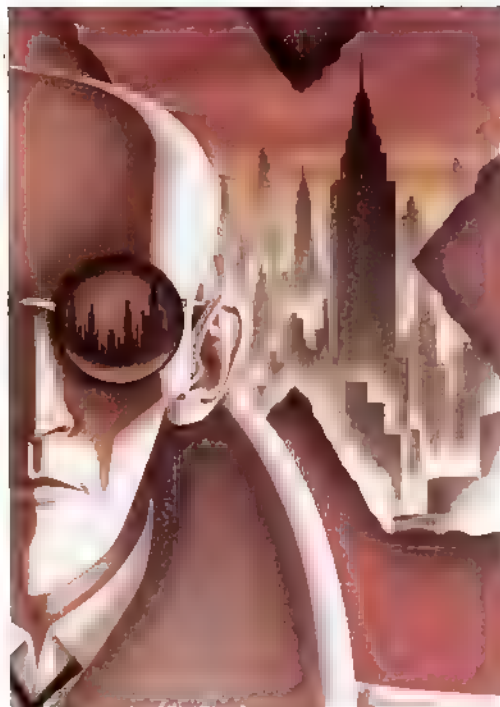
"I guess you have to look at it like this," opines Haring: "ten years from hence, is anyone going to care if you were a college radio band or not? And when do you graduate if you are a college band?" That's what we'll soon find out.



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MISTER

X

PLAYING WITH
THE
POCKET UNIVERSE

Wayne Hussey is a lot of things to a lot of people—former guitarist for Dead or Alive and Sisters of Mercy, current leader of the Mission, Mormon, drunkard, the male Siouxsie Sioux, fake bisexual/androgynous. But in no view does he occupy so much space as in his own.

Sitting in a Thai restaurant, draped in a tattered purple velvet smoking jacket, bangles, sparkled nail polish, and paisley vest, and downing screwdrivers and beef curry, Hussey seems very pleased with himself. Since leaving Sisters of Mercy and forming the comparatively upbeat Mission in 1986, he's had reason to be. They may not be a household name here, but in England the Mission's rise has been meteoric. The readers of the tabloid, *Sounds*, voted the Mission 1986's Best British Band, Best New Band, Best Live Act, and named the group's *Gods Own Medicine* as the year's best album. "We're like a shooting star," says Hussey. "Our ascent has been very direct. There have been no obstacles."

None, that is, except possibly for the habits of the band members themselves. The *Melody Maker* prefaced a review of *Gods Own Medicine* with the comment, "Wayne Hussey is invariably to be found in the midst of the most ungodly activities, revelling, quaffing, and throwing [himself] around town as he rampages ever onwards in search of the next likely boiler." And according to Hussey, the paper "has a bet on about which one of us is going to die first. Mick (Brown) the drummer is the favorite. I'm second. My money is on Mick."

Like fans of Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon* (his avowed favorite book), Hussey knows that excess can be its own end, but he claims his exploits are mere compensation for a repressed youth. "I was brought up as a Mormon, and that's still an important part of my life. I even met Donny Osmond last week."

"I'm no longer a practicing Mormon, but the way I was brought up still has a great effect on me. I'm very sentimental. I cry a lot. The last time was over a girl. The time before that, I had a bad comedown from speed. I got really paranoid and freaked out. I cried." There's no competing with today's sensitive male.

—John McFarland



The Mission (L-R)
Craig Adams,
Simon Hinckley,
Wayne Hussey,
and Mick Brown.

... Okay, lemme try and get this straight. There's this comic book character named Mr. X. Though he cuts a striking figure with his full-moon shades, hairless head, and boot-length black trench coat, no one seems to know who he really is. Just turned up one day in the deco metropolis of Radiant City—a "psychotecturally" planned ideal city that is driving its inhabitants mad—and has been haunting the place like he owned it ever since. Mercedes calls him "Santos." Consuelo thinks he's her long-missing ex-husband Walter Eichmann, one of Radiant City's architects—until the real Eichmann shows up, and both he and the dame are gunned down by gangster Arnold Zamora's triggermen. Before he buys it, Eichmann tells Mercedes that Mr. X is Pierre Radique, the chemist who developed the sleeplessness formula to which Mr. X is addicted. Then Radique's body turns up next to Eichmann's in the morgue. Zamora, before he buys it, announces that Mr. X is Simon M—(bang!), which Katsuda takes to mean Simon Myers, Radiant City's other architect. But then Mercedes finds an old magazine picture of the vanished Pelham Wells, who looks suspiciously like a certain bespectacled egghead...

Confused? That's the idea. While most comics still pander in a 12-year-old mind, there's a rapidly multiplying fistful targeted at more adult sensibilities. Along with Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen*, Frank Miller's *Dark Knight*, the Hernandez Bros.' *Love & Rockets*, and Howard Chaykin's *American Flagg!*, Mr. X has appropriated the language and format of traditional American comic books—their self-contained "pocket universe" aspect—and realigned them to serve a subversive agenda. Toying with the givens, Mr. X's protagonist assumes several identities and origins, each of them equally unreliable, and each forcing the story to begin anew. Anyone expecting a linear narrative is in for a frustrating ride.

The smartass behind what Frank Miller calls "perhaps the first legitimate combination of science fiction and German expressionism to be seen in comics" is writer and art director Dean Motter. Motter gives the book its coolly modern design scheme, a look more associated with record jackets than comics. Which ain't surprising, considering he did time as art director of CBS Canada, collaborated with the late Marshall McLuhan on an as yet unpublished book, and currently heads up a multiple award-winning design studio. Combine that sensibility with current illustrator Seth's angular, idiosyncratic Futurism and some licks copped from the Orson Welles noir classics *The Third Man* and *Touch of Evil*, and you've got one hell of an uncomely comic—resembling more the work of Europeans like Moebius than any American practitioners of the form.

Whatever Mr. X is—or isn't—it continues to sneak into comic shops every other month (ten issues so far). An omnibus paperback of the first four issues—written and drawn by the Hernandez Bros. from Motter's templates—has just come out. Buy 'em, and tell 'em Pierre sent you... no make that Walter... or maybe Pelham... whatever.

—Lou Stathis

SPINS

David Bowie,
Prince,
Hüsker Dü,
Simply Red,
Psychedelic Furs,
Lyle Lovett,
Los Lobos,
Hank Williams Jr.,
Personal Effects

Edited by Glenn
O'Brien

Platter du Jour

David Bowie
Never Let Me Down
EMI

When you're a living legend, things are done a little differently. For example, you might release your record to the press the day it hits the stores. The press might take this as a case of fame: "Is it any wonder . . . I reject you best." But this secrecy is legit. A cassette that gets to one radio station early has a way of making other stations very unhappy. Then there are the guys who find albums a lot easier to counterfeit than \$20 bills. So we try to be understanding when we're invited up to the office to listen to the album. It may make the reviewer's job tough, but that's show biz. So here's a glimpse of Bowie's latest, first impressions from a couple of spins—very impressed impressions.

Curtain opens to a power buzz as bigtime as Chernobyl. "Day-In Day-Out." Big beat kicks in and it looks like another existential dance party—a snake dance into a future where the rituals are ritzy and the art is glamorous and medicinal. Buzzwords, central themes, and catchphrases employed in this song include: "backup," "one good rush," "homeboy," and "grail." As the title suggests, this number seems to be about habit and its discontents.

"Time Will Crawl" is a great backbeat metaphor train. Bowie makes a lot of statements. They don't follow but they add up.

Bowie croons his way into "Beat Your Own Drum." It's his Haute Croon. Beginning in a drift of moody melodrama he works up a romantic swell of melody, charging it with sex electricity like a horny thunderhead until the static leaps into a beat. It's a sort of exercise in the physics of a love jones. Gorgeously melodic mood music generates so much juice that rock is the only solution to the equation. And it rocks;



Anton Corbijn

Bowie copping "Rebel Rebel" from himself.

The swipe in "Never Let Me Down" is from Sylvia Robinson's "Pillow Talk." He absconds with the best part of that tune and builds a nice new song around it. It's a weird mix—harmonica, whistling, funk-counterfunk rhythm guitar—but it works like a love charm.

When I heard that there was a tune called "Zeroes" on the album, I half expected it to be a rewrite of "Heroes": "We can be zeroes . . . just for one day." Bowie's rewritten himself before, but not this time. This starts out with Bowie doing a semi-intelligible MC intro over what appears to be the screams of a live crowd. Sounds like he's introducing an act named "Ziggy." Then you realize those aren't screams, those are synthesizer abstractions that flicker like flames. It's a provocative and macabre abstraction of liveness, of mob pleasure, revealing the audience as a single creature. Fade into a pop rocker—rock-solid drums, good old harmonies, and Bowie singing steady and

strong and catchy just like he did on *Ziggy*. Except for the special effects and the words this is a flashback to Bowie's original hit formula. And it's got an artful retake of some now-extinct psychedelic special effects, like phasing, done with fun, but done beautifully. He sings about his "little red Corvette" and he sings about "Stopping the preaching and letting the love in." It's a parody informed by fondness instead of the usual cynicism. This is the catchiest tune yet, and it contains lines that are gems:

*You've arrived in the land of a thousand different
names
Where the fabulous sons have crashed their planes
in flames*

Bowie has concentrated his *Paisley Park* into a single tune. This is his psychedelic-revival, summer-of-love rerun; it's loaded and it's perfect.

"Glass Spider" is the most obviously unusual song here. It's a fairy tale. It begins with dramatic orchestration and Bowie narrating a legend about a mythical arachnid that lived in "the Zi Quang province of eastern country." Then it shifts into a dialectically constructed mode—an odd amalgam of "hi-energy," show tune, light opera, and "metal lite." The concept sounds like a mess, but the reality is a charming monster, chimerical music for a chimerical bug. In the hands of anyone else, a track fitting this description would almost have to be real hybrid corn.

Then, bless him, rather than returning to earth after "pushing the outside of the envelope," Bowie visits another small planet on "Shining Star (Making My Love)." This one does have a superficial resemblance to pop music, but only as genetic raw material for an experiment in mutation. Bowie takes the lightest, catchiest of teen pop songs, complete with adorable falsetto, and twists into it a ditty touching on "two weeks in a crack house," vice, vermin, lice, and cowardice. He does a little rap, dropping names like Trotsky, Sinn Féin, and Hitler. Then he prettily ties the whole thing up with a Top 40 chorus: "Making my love like a shining star." He wraps up horror like a Sweet 16 present. It's a joke in a way, and from this description it sounds like cynicism turned elaborately vicious. But I think it's cynicism simply turned over. It's about how good things and bad things are flip sides of the same thing:

*I could be your great misfortune—
Well I could make you happy every
goddamn single day of your life.*

"New York's in Love" is back to earth. It's got enough gravity to make dancing likely, and it's got enough chops to make dancing hot. Bowie's still speaking in tongues, but these tongues are sticking out and buzzing like raspberry.

"87 & Cry" is a rewrite of the Modern Lovers' "Road Runner." That's cool. Bowie observes the African theory that certain beats and licks are the phone numbers of the gods. The words here are dada jive, automatic writing on cue cards, precision nonsense, braille for the feet.

"Too Dizzy" is a love song with a beat. It's up and around. It's got a wise-guy sax. It's the closest thing on this album to a Huey Lewis song. It makes classical romantic complaints: "I'm trying not to lose control." It makes classically competitive amatory claims: "I'm ten times the man than any guy around." It makes classical love declarations: "I'm helpless in love with you." But unlike most songs with all those classical ingredients, this one is a classic.

The show closes with "Bang Bang," a song by Iggy Pop and Ivan Kral. It's a hip, extravagant, and sublimely cool rockarama production number. How cool is it? A pulse appears out of nowhere, tips off a big beat. Bowie shows up and drawls "Wow." Very casual. "This ain't the right thing to do . . . so . . . so let's . . . so let's GO!" Ouch.

Perfection of rock 'n' roll logic, from the world's forgotten Zen master boy. Perfect rock 'n' roll chill delivery from the world's maestro mouthpiece. Serious guitar overdrive. Black angel chorus. Drumming loud as thunder. And the magic word, the sacred text of those born to be wild:

*Bang bang . . . I got mine
Bang bang . . . and you are next in
line*

Bowie has his ups and downs. Sometimes he has seemed to be going through the motions. But even his flops have



The Prince Prance: A sign o' the times.

been interesting. His blatant imitations have been innately original. His occasional embarrassing efforts have been admirable in their riskiness. And his lulls have almost seemed to encapsulate the lulls of the world. Maybe Bowie has been dogging it for a few years, but for whatever reasons he seems to have recaptured his interest and intensity. *Never Let Me Down* is an inspired and brilliantly crafted work. It's charged with a positive spirit that makes art soul food; it's imbued with the contagious energy that gives ideas a leg to dance on.

—Glenn O'Brien

Prince Sign o' the Times Warner

I guess you know what the problem with Prince is: he's too good. Too bad, too. Because he's so good he can do anything he wants, and sometimes he wants to do some really dumb stuff. And sometimes the dumb stuff he does works out to be the best stuff anybody's ever done. Ever.

Now anybody else, after a debacle like *Under the Cherry Moon* had his career as a director/actor/auteur/love-god swirling down the toilet, nearly sinking his customarily brilliant album *Parade* in the process, would come out of their corner kind of cautious-like. Maybe a

quick cross-over step back toward somewhere in the exact very middle of *Purple Rain* terrain, something safe and sure. Something career-minded.

So what does Prince do? He takes a left, a hard left, and he does it laughing. *Sign o' the Times* sounds so loose it could be nothing but outtakes—except nobody else's outtakes would sound so strong, rock so hard, swing so free.

Most folks would kill for a groove like "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man"—it's that patented Prince prance of his, the strut that shook the butt of "Delirious," of "Private Joy," of so much of *Dirty Mind*—but too bad. Prince lets it skip on down the road a while, then he downshifts into something slow and lean and swampy, with guitar lines snatching around at each other somewhere near the bottom. It starts building, it starts cooking, it starts rising and lifting and raising; he brings back the Prince prance and stirs them together to see if it works—it works—and then he takes it all off the stove and sets it aside. The only sound that's left is that of lesser mortals everywhere smiting their foreheads.

He's too good, he's too bad, he's too much. Anybody else would have brought out one record, not two—I guess he gets sick of all those extra tunes cluttering up the studio—and nobody else would have put out their first single since *Parade* with what looks like a photo of the auteur in a halter top, miniskirt, and beaded garter. (Michael Jackson considers these things, of course, but he's far too level-headed.) And as always, he's letting us have more of a peek under his monogrammed silk sheets than we might even care for. "If I Was Your Girlfriend" runs down the type of seduction concept only Prince could come up with: She'd take her clothes off in front of him if he was her girlfriend, right? So how come she won't just do it anyway? He's never been happy unless he's revealing himself one way or another, so he can't keep from doing it here once more: "If I was your girlfriend, would you let me dress you? I mean, help you pick out your clothes before you go out?"

Sign o' the Times sounds like a throwaway, a toss-off, a relaxed run-back of last month's bedroom tapes. From anybody else, it'd be indulgent; from Prince, it's just more genius. He sounds as goofy and loose as he's ever been, and lines like, "Baby, I can't stand to see you happy/More than that, I hate to see you sad . . ." go slipping by without any special notice. He seems reconciled—for the moment—with who he is and what he is and even with what he isn't. He's dropped his most messianic urges, too, and that makes every moment that leans back in the direction of *Dirty Mind* and *Controversy* and 1999 all the easier. There's nothing on *Sign o' the Times* that's as ground-breaking as *Parade*'s "Girls & Boys," but there's a lot on *Sign* that's as cool as "Kiss." It doesn't sound like he was trying to do the finest thing he's ever done, it just sounds fine.

—Bart Bull

Simply Red Men and Women Elektra

Mick Hucknall's voice is as unruly and as calculated as that mess of red curls spilling down one side of his face; both are trademarks of a savvy eccentricity, unlovely but brashly expressive. Sounding pinched, nasal, grainy—tart and sweet in one phrase—Hucknall insinuates himself into a song with as much cold tenacity as passion. In this album about the battle and the bond of the sexes, he works for love—and comes up with a pained rapture, an ecstatic angst.

Listen to him on "The Right Thing," the opening cut and first single from *Men and Women*. Hucknall combines a soul boy's boasting with a singer's bravado, assuring both his bedmate and his audience that he's "gonna do the right thing." As pillow talk, this is pretty pushy stuff ("I ain't never gonna stop/To get what you got, you better take what I bring"), but if his claims about "getting harder now" are meant to reflect on his musical performance, he has a point. Here and throughout *Men and Women*, Hucknall and company sound sharper and more focused. They haven't given up the range that made *Picture Book*, their debut, such a stylistic grab bag (this album's covers include Cole Porter, Bunny Wailer, and Sly Stone), but working with producer Alex Sadkin gives Simply Red a clean, crackling

edge. Just what they need for these tough and tender love songs, even the thinnest of which cut like a knife.

But mostly it's Hucknall who keeps this material honed and bright. If his songs here (two written with Motown legend Lamont Dozier) tend to sound selfish (three successive refrains: "I can't be trusted," "please don't make me suffer," "I won't feel guilty, I won't feel bad"), he delivers them with rakish charm or aching regret and he gets over. Sly Stone's "Let Me Have It All" might be the album's antiromantic theme, but Hucknall tempers its crassness with a harsh echo of Stone's end-of-the-line desperation and darkens it with intimations of love in vain. Even the true love songs—Wailer's "Love Fire" and Porter's "Ev'ry Time We Say Good-bye"—have an oddly elegiac quality, a sense of passion's fragility. Sensibly, Hucknall makes no attempt to resolve the contradictory muddles of soulful self-absorption and amorous despair, but the album closes on a tentatively hopeful note with "Maybe Someday," a contemplative, delicately emotive plea for understanding and, someday, love. If Simply Red serves up more mood than meat this time around, more impressionism than social realism (no companion piece here for "Money\$ Too Tight to Mention"), *Men and Women* establishes Hucknall as one of the canniest troubadours of modern romance—wicked and wise.

—Vince Aletti



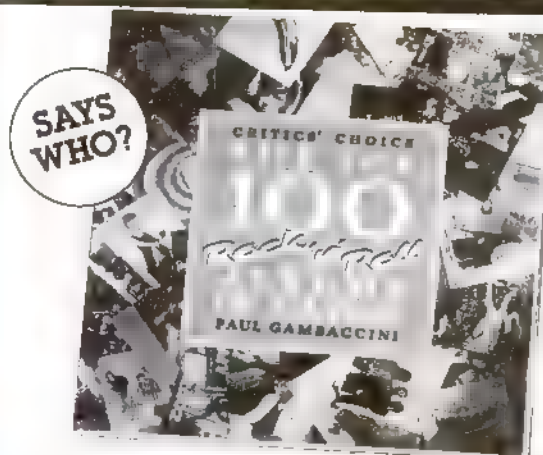
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Los Lobos

By the Light of the Moon
Warner

Los Lobos have one foot in Mexico, one in East L.A., an eye on a past and present of poverty and disappointment, and an eye on a hope-filled future. Their music—rough-and-tumble rock 'n' roll and folk-rock ballads, adorned with the sounds of traditional Mexican instru-

ments—reflects this outlook. Many of their songs have been about the eternal stock of rock, like drinking and heartache, but their best have subtly and tenderly looked into the hearts of people who have left their homes and come to a new land. In their previous album, *How Will the Wolf Survive?*, the elements of their personality came together to produce a powerful and beautiful song, "Will the Wolf Survive?". The connection between the mythic wolf and the young Chicano, told over stirring rock accented with Mexican percussion, all held together by a beautifully played guitar bridge, turned this song into one of the most memorable pieces of music of the last year.

The group's new album, *By the Light of the Moon*, finds the band flexing its social conscience more strongly than before. "One Time, One Night" is a song about the power and fragility of hope; it posits the image of America as the land of the free and brave, and then undermines that image with vignettes of random death and despair. "Is This All There Is?" is about immigrants—

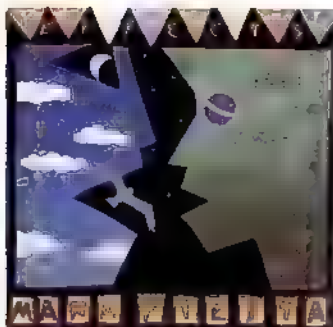
"tired souls with empty hands"—who discover that the streets in their new land are not exactly paved with gold. "The Mess We're In" catalogues a series of social problems—war, poverty, homelessness. These are all good songs, made more powerful through their restraint and understatement.

But the best of their socially concerned songs is not specifically social or political at all. "River of Fools" is an almost mystical ballad about a voyage, "a journey that has no end." Maybe the song is about immigrants who arrive at a new place, only to find that their journey has just begun. Or maybe the song is about life in general, which often hands us less than we hoped for. It's a pretty song, almost too pretty. The image is one of profound disappointment; it's surprising that it never turns into anger.

Los Lobos are comparable in some respects to the Band, not in sound particularly, although both are great fundamental rock 'n' roll bands. They're more comparable in that each band has the ability to take from its roots while

looking at the future, to express both its personal feelings and its political ideas, to be both traditional and current. Like the Band, Los Lobos have the potential to become a Great American Group, where the adjective "American" stands for something more than an answer to a passport question. *By the Light of the Moon* is not an album as fully realized as *How Will the Wolf Survive?*, but it's a good album, and a more ambitious one. Los Lobos have looked at the world and told many sad stories about what they've seen. So far, they've aimed to tap our pity. When Los Lobos learn to tap our anger and our courage, as "Will the Wolf Survive?" tapped our passion, they'll be reaching that deepest level of feeling that distinguishes great music and great bands. They are heading in the right direction. —Jamie Malanowski

Los Lobos of East L.A. (L-R) Cesar Rosas, Louie Perez, Steve Berlin, and David Hidalgo, approach their apotheosis as one of America's Great Groups.



ened her singing style and slowed her phrasing; the result is a voice with a sweeter, samba-like flavor.

Best of all, *Mana Fiesta* features a moodier side of Personal Effects, a side well suited to Fournier's voice and crying soprano sax. The band has always been energetic, but the combination of that energy with slightly eerie arrangements such as those on "Day Is Coming" and "Heroes" (with its "Come Together" bass line, snaky drums, and dreamy horn), creates something unexpected.

The album's most appealing composition, "Temptation," features a mini-



Robert Martin

Personal Effects *Mana Fiesta* Enigma

After four pleasant, quirky platters, there was no reason to expect much change from Personal Effects. But a funny thing happened on the way to the recording studio. Instead of packaging another dose of non-offensive new-wave bar music, this Rochester combo has shifted gears and gone for something more endearing and a little more pop. The result is *Mana Fiesta*, an LP that somehow manages to sound both homemade and high-tech.

Much of the change is in the band's sound and production. Peggi Fournier's farfisa-style organ has been replaced by an FM-style modulated keyboard. Bob Martin's reserved guitar is well preserved. Drummer Paul Dodd has abandoned some of his bar-band backbeat in favor of more sophisticated drum samples and arrangements.

With the backing tracks clearer and better organized, Fournier can relax and swing more as a vocalist. She's broad-

stripper horn section, stride beat, and great vocal delivery. As the group eggs her on, Fournier selflessly dissects the dichotomy of love and revolution.

As a songwriter team, Fournier and Dodd are spousal popsters with a native art vision somewhere between Timbuk-3 and pre-'80s Talking Heads. Their strong suit is the observational narrative, as in the spinning "Shower of Roses" or the carnivalesque "Love Potion." Although the songwriting has improved, the band still needs a bit of fine-tuning to flesh out its vision; the poetic strain, for example, on "In This World," ("Sometimes a woman has to be a man"), obstructs an otherwise well-built song.

Fortunately, Personal Effects is starting to see itself clearly in the musical mirror, and as a result *Mana Fiesta* is a well-crafted low-fi effort. By shaking off some self-consciousness and flexing their newly developed pop music muscles, they've produced a sleeper of an LP that succeeds in a sweet, simple way.

—Rich Stim

Q: What do these three bands have in common?

THE WIPERS FOLLOW BLIND

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The Word Report

PERSONAL EFFECTS MANA FIESTA

cassette 72189-4 album 72189-1



This outstanding quartet from Rochester, NY has a haunting unique sound based on musical ability, not gimmicks.
Billboard

A: Absolutely Nothing.



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Psychedelic Furs

Midnight to Midnight
CBS

The Psychedelic Furs are loved and respected and purchased and broadcast on collegiate and other forms of radio. It's not hard to understand why; they're very accomplished. Richard Butler has a great character voice, perfectly balanced between lovable and nasty. Their playing is intense and well thought out. They are state of the art in their production.

What I find hard to understand about the Psychedelic Furs is: 1) How and why do you dance to it? I understand, from reading *Rockpool*, the *Billboard* of the college radio set, that this album is a masterpiece of what you call Dance-Oriented Rock, or DOR (apparently unconnected with the DOR in Wilhelm Reich's terminology: Deadly Orgone Radiation). 2) How can you explain the successful band that they are today in relation to the important band they were in 1980?

Let's work on that one first.

The original Furs were a second-wave punk band. They had the rock 'n' roll intensity of the Sex Pistols school. They played hard and strong. But they worked a much artier bag. They had a degree

in the Velvet Underground. They evoked the eccentric side of the Stones (Between the Buttons, "We Love You"). They were art school anarchists. They sounded transcendently jaded, sophisticatedly alienated.

That their sensibility seemed Velvets/Warhol/baroque-Stones-imitative was actually original, compared to prevailing boutique radicalism. They reinvented the drone. They understood the saxophone as a wall. To the punk circuit they introduced enlightened ambivalence as an alternative to posed nihilism. As the Stones had done before them they provided an enlightened, complex take on the sloganized attitudes of their peers. Where the Stones deconstructed "luv" the Furs deconstructed "no future."

Their name even made a silly but rich sort of sense. Psychedelic had bottomed out as kitsch. Fur was not ecologically acceptable. They twisted together the borderline cases of the expanded mind and the bankruptcy of glamour. They celebrated what was to be found on the other side of the black hole of cynicism. They expressed confusion—but active, informed confusion. Their "We Love You" was a manifesto of post-camp Zen, with its beyond-ironic litany of "I'm in love

PSYCHEDELIC FURS



with's.

So if I'm disappointed in the Furs eight years later, it's only in the shadow of their original edge. *Midnight to Midnight* is poetic at times, but it never extends poetry. The music has its moments of intensity, particularly the charged guitar solos, but the songs seem to be the prisoners of their production.

One of the problematic things about microchip technology is that really heavy rock 'n' roll bands like the Psychedelic Furs can now have a glockenspiel in the mix without having a glockenspielist in the group. Or horns. Or a symphony. The Psychedelic Furs have bought the "excellence" of recording technology, lock, stock, and digital. The arrangements are enormous, but always smaller than the sum of their parts, or smaller even than their guitar part.

There are glimpses of the old smoldering Furs here, but they're only details of songs. A word here, a guitar line there. But judge for yourself when you hear it on your local easy-listening punk broadcast.

Okay, I've figured out how you dance to it. You dance to it like Belinda Carlisle. Easy does it. Don't sweat it. Left, right, left, right.

—Roger Egbert

LYLE LOVETT



Lyle Lovett

Lyle Lovett
MCA/Curb

You don't hear people talking about songs that much, you know what I mean? In the streets and in the parking lots and checkout counters they're raving about the mix and the remix and the way Steve Lillywhite or Oscar de la Renta gated the high hat to sound like

a tractor-trailer.

"You hear Janet Jackson's new single?"

"Yeah. Great snare sound."

If I put out a record and the first thing anyone wanted to talk to me about was the drum sound, I'd go home and cry. Or shoot my drummer. No offense, but if you can walk down the street humming a snare sound, then I hope we're navigating different neighborhoods. "Once upon a time you dressed so fine. . . ." Listen back, and you'll find that "Like a Rolling Stone" has the cheesiest drum sound in the world, and on "What Goes On" and "Sweet Jane" and "Beginning to See the Light" and most of the great Velvet Underground songs, it sounds like Mo Tucker's playing very large boxes of Special K.

It's the songs you hear, the songs. You can take a great song home with you and into the shower, hum it on the bus. Or keep it safe in your head, and it'll feed you, it'll change the way you look at the world. A great song is a national treasure, it's a new thought that keeps right on thinking itself. Finding a great song, something you never heard before, is like discovering a new constellation or just happening on penicillin.

Lyle Lovett is a country singer with a sweet, honeyed voice reminiscent of Jesse Winchester and with the sly, understated phrasing of Guy Clark or Townes Van Zandt. He can't write a good fast song yet, and his ballads strain and overreach, still finding their way; but damn if he hasn't written the best song I've heard since I don't know when:

Who keeps on loving you
When you've been cheating
And spending your nights on the town.
And who keeps on saying that he still wants you
When you're through running around.
God does
But I don't
God will
But I won't
And that's the difference
Between God and me.

—"God Will," Lyle Lovett

First time I heard that song I was on the floor, like in those old Farmer Gray cartoons where lightning bolts shoot out every which way and the cat or the mouse or the old farmer keels over dumbstruck, stars spinning around their head. People I haven't spoken to in years I've called up and played this for over the phone, long distance even. It's pure and simple and vicious and I've never heard anything quite like it. If nothing else on the album even comes close, well, you only have to invent penicillin once. Even if Lovett never ever writes another song, I think he can consider this a life pretty well spent.

—Brian Cullman

Left: Selling out to digital "excellence": The Psychedelic Furs (L-R) Tim Butler, Richard Butler, and (aloft) John Ashton. Right: Mick Hucknall gets hard on Men and Women.

TARGET: AMERICA



Spandau Ballet's new album, "Through The Barricades," is off to a fast start throughout Europe.

The title track and the album both shot right into the European Top-10. In England, Spandau's five recent nights at Wembley were completely sold out.

Now it's your turn to fall for "Through The Barricades."

The new single, "How Many Lies?" is the long-awaited follow-through to Spandau Ballet's U.S. breakthrough hit, "True."

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Hank Williams, Jr.
Hank Live
Warner/Curb

So which is better, *Springsteen Live* or *Hank Live*? Which is the real deal, which is the true hot setup, which one really rocks? And which, five-record set or skinny little single LP, is the bigger joke?

Well, first we need to take into consideration that Hank Jr. meets or exceeds all federal standards for loud-mouth blowhard redneck assholes, that he's never gone more than about 20 minutes in his life without reminding everyone in earshot just exactly whose son he is, and that he's got even less brains than he does talent.

And let's remember as well that it's Honest Bruce we're comparing him to, the beloved Boss, the archetypal image of a rock star in our time, the guy who gives rock critics nationwide a rigid hard-on at his name's mere mention.

And Junior kicks his ass.

Because obnoxious and ignorant and dimwitted as he is all over this record, you can find Junior on it. You can locate him, he's human, he exists. Trying to locate a living Springsteen on *Springsteen Live* is like trying to verify the existence of Vanna White by watching *Wheel of Fortune* reruns, like trying to prove Ted Kennedy exists by reading his press releases. Flawed and fucked-up and foolish, Junior exists.

One of the great things about live albums is they let you hear what the guy with his name on the front really thinks about his audience by the way they scream in the mix. Honest Bruce, Man of the People, reduces his audience to the stadium-rock equivalent of a sitcom laugh track. They applaud when the applause sign goes on, they disappear when they're supposed to shut up, and after big climactic moments they get to moo Bruce's name back at him.

I come from Arizona, and I don't have any nostalgia for real rednecks, much less the yee-hawin' redneck wannabes that Junior's record is all full of. Real rednecks think dumb is a virtue, and fake rednecks are even dumber than that. But I can hear those people here all the same: drunk and horny and dumber than a box of rocks, they're allowed to exist in all their virtues. I may not like 'em but Junior does, and you can hear exactly who they are on his record, one yee-haw yahoo after another.

For his very first video ever, Spring-

steen planted some sexless little actress/model in the front row and then brought her onstage to dance with him. Do you suppose he tried to fuck her afterward? Because right in the middle of his live album, Junior tries to put the make on some babe in the second row, and if he didn't fuck her afterward, you damn sure know he tried. Is it ever possible to imagine Springsteen trying, much less putting it on his album? Do you suppose when the video cameras are gone and the tapes are no longer rolling, they fold Springsteen up and put him away somewhere?

Junior can't ever once shut up about who his daddy was, and how Hank himself woulda done it just the way Junior's doin' it now, and how if you don't like Hank Senior and Junior both, you can kiss Junior's ass, and on and on and on until you're ready to puke. But at least he makes you want to puke. Everywhere Springsteen's live record is tasteful, Junior's is the absolute absence of taste. Everywhere Springsteen's record is gutless—and that's everywhere, up and down all ten sides of all five records—Junior's record is bragging about something and doing it loud. *Springsteen Live* is mistake-free, goof-proof, sani-pure. *Hank Live*, on the other hand, is a mistake.

Junior does one of the old man's tunes, needless to say, and he does some country blues and some Lynyrd Skynyrd and when he does ZZ Top he mentions John Lee Hooker and Lightnin'

Hopkins. Mean Springsteen's do that doesn't swig a steal from H wouldn't be tast: he makes literary when Honest Bru it's by that emine rectness, Woody t have given his left r if he could have bee Williams was, but closer than Junior ha

It happens that I saw Springsteen perform on the night after Ronald Reagan was first elected president, and Springsteen had some angry, dejected, disillusioned, confused things to say in the seconds before he sang "Badlands." That same performance, that same night, is on *Springsteen Live*, but the things he had to say aren't. They've vanished. I couldn't tell you what in the blue-eyed world Junior thinks about Reagan or anything else but if he'd cursed the president or praised him to heaven when he was making his live record, he would have had the balls to leave it in.

Country music never used to be about being perfect and neither did rock 'n' roll. Hank Williams, Jr., may be some kind of overblown bonehead but at least he's not anal retentive. He's sure as hell more of a rocker than Bruce Springsteen is right now. I'm not even sure Bruce Springsteen exists. I doubt it.

—Bart Bull

Hüsker Dü

Warehouse: Songs and Stories
Warner

At its best, rock 'n' roll is the sound of civilization unraveling. I can't think of many single albums, let alone double albums, that truly embody this. I count them on two hands: *Exile on Main Street*; *London Calling*; *Born to One Nation Under a Groove*; *My Aim Is True*; *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols*; *Talking Heads 77*; and the Replacements' *Tim*. That each of these albums shares similar themes, regardless of musical differences, is a signature of their greatness: all of them succeeded in addressing basic adolescent needs, whether social, emotional, sexual, or moral.

With that in mind, consider *Warehouse: Songs and Stories*, the new double album by Hüsker Dü. Hardcore purists will probably blow it off as a sell-out. To them I say: "Feed your head." Although Hüsker Dü may not have been true to their school by signing with the major Warner Brothers label, one thing is for sure: *Warehouse* is the most phenomenal collection of pre-, post-, and pure-punk songs to be released in the '80s. It is a traditional rock album created from the embers of the classic punk aesthetic that the band first showcased on *Land Speed Record* and *Zen Arcade*, and continued to flirt with on *New Day Rising* and *Flip Your Wig*. While they attempted to bring punk out of the closet with *Candy Apple Grey*, it still contained their trademark thrashing sound, but with a cleaner production and more clearly delineated sense of emotional struggle.

The 20 new Bob Mould-Grant Hart songs on *Warehouse* map out this same territory of teenage angst. It's an enduring theme, but Mould and Hart have fine-tuned it here. From the opening sonic burst of "These Important Years" through the gruelling "Bed of Nails" to the almost funky "You Can Live at Home," Hüsker Dü covers the full range of the teenage nervous breakdown. Their songs are like clenched fists aimed at the four walls of frustration; any teenager living in a world of unfulfilled desire and headbanging claustrophobia will listen to this album and find revelation in its strangely upbeat message. For though *Warehouse* gives no solutions, it does offer spiritual transcendence. It covers familiar ground with such exactness and commitment to detail that Hüsker Dü's world becomes the same as 16-year-old Johnny's.

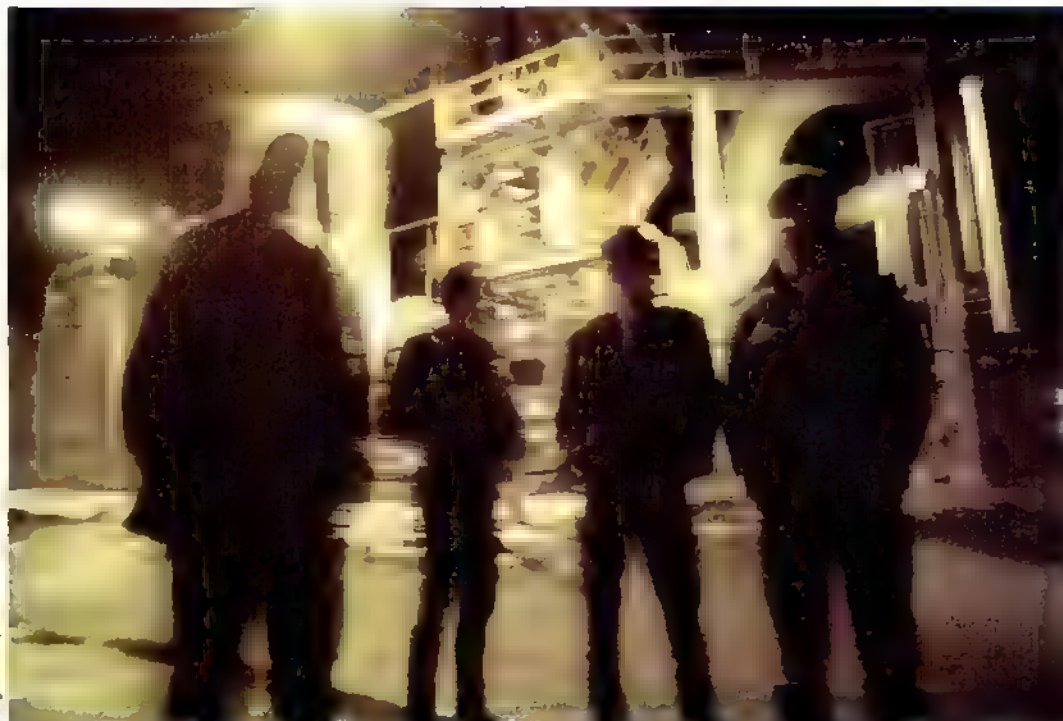
With *Warehouse*, they have produced a poignant and moving teenage manifesto, and they force us to hear it on their terms. This is the music of youth, music that reaffirms the notion that we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

—Bruce Warren



Left: Hank Williams's son. Right: *Personal Effects* (L-R) Peggi Fournier, Bob Martin, and Paul Dodd: well-crafted and low-fi.

UNDERGROUND



Douglas Dabney

What are today's ten-year-olds thinking about: The death of John Wayne? The destruction of the Soviet Union? Big Fights? Answer: All of the above.

Column by
Judge I-Rankin'

Picking a space somewhere between après-punk aggravation and brooding power pop, **Honor Role** offers a rigorous discourse on the art of thinking. *The Pretty Song* neatly backlights the band's preoccupation with alienation, military-industrial overkill, Third World strife, and grinding boredom. Honor Role approaches each song as if it were a curious-looking rock on the beach, inspects it thoughtfully for a few minutes, then puts it down to search for another. In the process, Honor Role may or may not be satisfied with what they encounter. Generally, they're not pleased. "Anonymous Cave" starts out with hair-raising feedback abstractions à la Butthole Surfers which segue into a swinging, rock 'em, sock 'em punk epiphany about loneliness. Still more uneasiness about estrangement from others reappears on "Purgatory" as fidgety guitar filings lurk menacingly close to Eastern bass perforations. "Go Places" and "Shuffle" posit themselves as pre-hardcore madrigals concerned with the plight of the homeless and psychic inertia, respectively. Top-notch production lends an exquisite sparkling agony to Honor Role's punitive yet sage punch-ups. Go to the head of the class by contacting Honor Role at 9 South Pine St., Richmond, VA 23220.

Mighty Sphincter may rank as the only band that can honestly point to the old *Dark Shadows* TV series as a major influence. Their album, *The New Manson Family*, wallows chest deep in an ecstasy of bile, sputum, severed penises, skulls with glowing eyes, hideous mutants under the bed, and way-gone nightmares that make a bad PCP trip look like a walk on the beach. No wonder—it's produced by Alice Cooper. On the title cut, Sphincter idolizes the exploits of the Manson family. Doug Clark's heavily flanged guitar propels the song substance into a sonic canyon of minor-chord deception and perversion. Scary stuff this, especially when Sphincter trashes Charlie Manson's fave Beatles tune "Helter Skelter." If you've ever wondered what standing in the exhaust of a 747 at full-throttle while staring at a Heironymus Bosch triptych sounds like—and who hasn't—this one's fer you. Consider yourself warned. Contact Mighty Sphincter in their caskets at P.O. Box 23316, Phoenix, AZ 85063.

Homelessness tends to be a secret theme of the blues, but don't tell **The Heartfixers**. They've sho 'nuff found a home on *Cool On It*, a bracing mojo-blues affirmation dosed with rock 'n' roll. Guitarist Tinsley Ellis



picks, clicks, and kicks out blues-based originals alongside astute cover versions of Bo Diddley's "Hong Kong, Mississippi" and Chuck Berry's classic "Tulane." "Time to Quit" highlights Ellis's aerobic blues finesse backed by answering sax mournings. The title cut, "Greenwood Chainsaw Boogie," and "Drivin' Woman" find the

Heartfixers in well-explored territory—rock 'n' blooze riffing suffused with a beery, sweaty ambience. Surprise knockout cut is Ellis's cover of Leo Kottke's "Sailor's Grave on the Prairie." Contact the Heartfixers through Landslide Records, 450 14th St. NW, Suite 201, Atlanta, GA 30318.

Who is **Human Skab** and why is he saying rad things about Russians, Skeletor, Hitler, and John Wayne? Human Skab is a ten-year-old mowhawked kid who uses *Thunderhips and Saddlebags* as a teetering platform to rant and rave in prepubescent dementia on such songs as "Phone Goof Off," "Eat My Scabs/Song of the Century," "We Need to Destroy the Soviet Union," and "Grandest Fight of the Year." Bashing spoons on buckets and banging on a poorly tuned upright piano, Skab emits screwy non-sequiturs like "Your wife is almost a widow but she doesn't know it," or "Five people digging though a mountain, One person left playing the piano." Jeepers, these kids today! If Captain Beefheart were ten years old, this is what he'd probably sound like. A must for adults who want to know what kids are thinking about. Human Skab will be delighted to hear from you at P.O. Box 1130, Elma, WA 98541.



With all the African musicians recording in and/or expatriating to France (Alfa Blondie, Fela Kuti, King Sunny, et. al.), it was inevitable that pan-Africanisms would filter through into French musicians' compositions. **Ramuntcho Matta** uses basic African (and some Indian) motifs as a base upon which to build spatio-aural tapestries that verge on minimalist jazz. *24 Hrs.* is a concept album that uses music as metaphors for parts of the day. All of side two is given over to "Night," a more playful extrapolation that is alternately forbidding and exciting. Manipulation of mood forms the crux of Matta's night-tripping as tablas ripple through xylophone tingling, lonesome sax filigrees, Miles Davis-ish trumpet cascades, and whispered vocal exhalations. Excellent background music for seduction scenes. Write to Ramuntcho Matta at Madrigal France, 140 rue de Théâtre, 75015, Paris, France.

Uniformly good compilations of progressively damaged underground bands are always a welcome discovery; *Passed Normal* is no exception. **Skeleton Crew** gets the album off to an abrasive start with live versions of "Rombo," "Killing Time," and "Man or Money," all three of which are used by Crew members Fred Frith and Tom Cora to explore the various noises that can be extracted from stringed instruments by picking, strumming, banging, slapping, and torturing them. Kind of like having a root canal without anaesthesia. **The Sediments** rip out Zappa-esque folderol with "Capitalism," a queasy rock-oriented ditty that has nothing to

Above left: *Honor Role* in search of a curious-looking rock; Below left: *Human Skab* puts his foot in it; Above: *RuPaul* hits the wall; Right: *Mighty Sphincter* (L-R) Wayne Frost, Doug Clark, Greg Hynes, Bill Yanok.

do with supply-side economics. Psychedelic C&W bastardizers **Shockabilly** do their best to irritate racists with the over-amped "I Keep the KKK in Line" and then proceed to take an extended hallucinatory vacation during "Shockabilly Weekend." All told, there are 58 minutes of exhilarating damage and improvisational doodlings, enough to satisfy everyone on your Christmas list. *Passed Normal* is available by sending \$7 to FOT Records, P.O. Box 4071, Bloomington, IL 61702-4071.

RuPaul is *Star Booty* and vice versa. *Star Booty* is the soundtrack to the film of the same name starring RuPaul (in real life a black drag artist from Atlanta) as a down 'n' out ex-model who manages to blast out of the ghetto to become a wowie-zowie model one more time. *Star Booty* is unctuous gay discoid funk with sarcastic lyrics. "I was the one who told you we should check into another scene," coos RuPaul sardonically to his girlfriend in "Ghetto Love," a lachrymose tale of Prince-ly romance and forgotten promises. "Ernestine's Rap" admonishes "I can tell by your knees you eat commodity cheese" while a ferocious slap-funk bass crushes the beat into a greasy spot on the dance floor. RuPaul's material is influenced by the trashy blaxploitation films of the early '70s, which he attacks with biting accuracy on the title cut and

"You Want Love." Along with the 6'7" RuPaul, fellow Atlantans and labelmates **Now Explosion** mine a similar synth-funk vein on *Bringin' It on Home to Daddy*—only their trashiness is lily-white and raised to a pornographic art form. Sporting the worst in '70s apparel—foot-wide lapels, ghastly leisure-suit polyester, gold chains by the meter, and four-inch platforms—the *Now Explosion* squirm their way across the jizzy underbelly of licentious porno-queen dalliances during "Bad, Bad, Bad." On "Nappy," a goofy chorus exhorts us to "Put your hands in the air and show your underarm hair!" while a robo-drum and synth do a two-and-a-half step with each other. Scratching your body in public never sounded so inviting. RuPaul and *Now Explosion* can both be had by writing to Funtone USA, Box 54472, Atlanta, GA 30308.

If you are involved in some sort of underground endeavor (band, solo project, whatever), send me the fruits of your labor. It could change someone's life. If you require a response of some sort, don't forget to enclose an S.A.S.E. Sorry, can't do reviews on a personal basis. My address is: Judge I-Rankin', 1338 E. Devonshire, Phoenix, AZ 85014. Go deh! P.S.: Many thanks to Brad Singer at Zia Records in Phoenix for making available the disks that have appeared in the last three *Underground* columns.



Right: We've got a caption and we're gonna use it: Fuzzbox (L-R) Tina, Magz, Vicki, and Jo;
Below: Gaye Bykers (clockwise from top) Heidi, Mary Wana, Sven-TT, Robber, and a mannequin.

SINGLES

Column by John Leland

Godfathers: "Love Is Dead" & "Angelo" b/w "Gone to Texas" (Corporate Image import)

Like all good Mods, the Godfathers have an early Who fixation as long as Manute Bol's arm. But unlike many good Mods, they don't use their buoyant twin-reverb pop as a springboard for commentary on British youth/class culture. Everything bounces, the guitars tremolo their way to small bigness, and harmonies kick the thing over. No way the GFs are as important or relevant or even as white-cross exciting as the Jam (they ain't even part of a Movement), but from here they sound more disposably fun.

Luther Ingram: "Don't Turn Around" (Profile)

Always loved this kind of go-ahead-and-leave ballad, in which the singer pretends to be wounded in love while his character pretends not to be. Ingram's latest is journeymanlike and way over-produced, nowhere near his best stuff. But when that chorus kicks in, or that snare hesitates just long enough, this comes close enough to pure stylized love to get over the hump. Long live professionalism, and hope that inspiration arrives next time.

Club Nouveau: "Lean on Me" b/w "Pump It Up (Lean on Me) Reprise" (Tommy Boy)

Funky, spare electro treatment that misses the original's warm sincerity (if you have a choice, lean on Bill Withers) but adds percussive spunk. "Specially when they jam a shuffle beat over the 'We Will Rock You' rhythm. Not to mention when the bass and the diva kick in. Back side funks and scats it up even more. This may be plastic, but it's real good plastic.

Mantronix: "Who Is It?" (Sleeping Bag)

Sporting six mixes of the kicker from the most successfully experimental rap album ever (buy it and you'll understand disco, high energy, Kraftwerk,



Tim Bower/Rehmo



Adrian Boag

swing, and hip hop simultaneously), this 12-inch is like a draftsman's diagram of the Mantronix gestalt: he doesn't create, he reorders and superimposes. A Mantronix cut isn't about notes and words and beats (though the latter tend to kick ass), it's about process; it's a construction in progress, and the interesting stuff isn't the walls but the order in which they're put up. Which makes this disk six different songs, or a suite, or whatever, and makes it cool enough to stand next to Strafe's "Set It Off." There's a tip of the hat to Art of Noise here, but if you need reference points this ain't the jam for you.

DJ Scott La Rock/Me, KRS One/Mr. D. Nice: "The Bridge Is Over" b/w "A Word From Our Sponsor" (B-Boy)

There's great radio in New York, but it only exists for six hours a week on the two Urban Contempo stations' rival rap shows. This crew here is hooked up with one, and Marley Marl, M.C. Shan, and Roxanne Shante are tied to the other. When Shan cut "The Bridge," about the

Queensbridge housing project and its role in hip hop, La Rock and co. answered with "South Bronx," attacking Shan. Both songs were hits, so both stations hadda play both. So La Rock's side scratched "The Bridge" with Run-D.M.C. screaming "shut up" (from "You Talk Too Much"), and Shan's man scratched the chorus to "South Bronx" into Shan's "Kill That Noise." Professionalism it ain't, but it cooked. "The Bridge Is Over" is La Rock's second punch, and it hits with some drop-dead reggae toasting and straight dis ("Roxanne Shante is only good for steady pumping," etc.). Waitin' for the counterpunch, spendin' Saturday nights glued to the box.

Simply Red: "The Right Thing" b/w "There's a Light" (Elektra)

Like most Simply Red records, this sounds to me more like a deft collection of formal gestures (chicken-scratch guitar fills, scatted "in the morning time"s and "in the midnight hour"s rubber-band bass, hi-hat swish) than a real groove experience. It's got all the makings of a boss cult dance record, but they don't hold together as anything other than disco for folks who don't like disco. Maybe, as with "Holding Back the Years" (dull on LP, cool on 12-inch), it's gonna take a killer remix. Either way, the flip on this is non-LP and not bad.

We've Got a Fuzzbox and We're Gonna Use It!: "What's the Point" & "Fever" b/w "Fuzzy Ramblings" & "Bohemian Rhapsody" (WEA import)

Possibly in the latter stages of their charmed life, Fuzzbox tally an unspecific primitivist jones, good intentions, and an ear for pop kitsch into a charming paean to incompetence. "What's the

Point" is a twangy surf/love thing that never succumbs to the self-conscious proficiency that kills so much English genre music. "Fuzzy Ramblings" is literally just unfocused conversation. "Fever" is as cloying as you'd expect from a cover this predictable, and "Bohemian Rhapsody" is a capella. And it's every bit as righteous as the Tetes Noires' a capella "White Wedding." Yah, boss.

Gaye Bykers on Acid: "Everything's Groovy" & "TV Cabbage" b/w "Space Rape" (In Tape import).
Thatcher on Acid: "Another One" & "Girt" b/w "Casablanca" & "Daddy" (All the Madmen import)

Predictably, the real good jokes end with the band names (unless you count the Bykers' threads), but that doesn't mean there aren't some passable ones on the wax. The Thatchers make pretty heavy angst rock out of fuzzy dissonant guitar, one-note bloke-on-the-street vocals, and a bass that says the Gang of Four didn't die in vain. The Bykers trash the deserving neopsychedelic icons and have a good time at it. They're produced by Jon Langford, and though they're neither as anarchic as the Membranes nor as fun as the Three Johns, they do pack the immediate appeal that good novelty music should. File next to Zodiac Mindwarp, if you're the type to do such things.

Half Pint: "Victory" (RAS)

He was the ragamuffin, the biggest star in Jamaica on the strength of one single, and now he wants a victory over starvation, poverty, and apartheid. That's what he wants. What he offers in return is a roster of platitudes laid down in a pleasant voice over the kind of catchy pop/reggae synthesis that Culture Club would have killed for. It's ridiculous, it's life-affirming, and it's springy enough to allow me to shut out the lyrics.

Public Enemy: "Public Enemy #1" b/w "Timebomb" (Def Jam)

Against a two-note drone, the man whom D.M.C. calls his idol sounds like just another smart guy with a gun, until he starts talking about jobs ("It's you they never hire") and family ("Your father fixes tires"), and the insults begin to sound like political criticism. And on the flip, he says he's def cause he's pro-black and anti-apartheid. Ain't sophisticated, and may not even be good politics, but it rocks with a much harder sense of the party than mosta that post-"Message" stuff.

Saqqara Dogs: "World Crunch" EP (Pathfinder)

Way neat raga-type stuff, probably done on electric geetar, with lots of bongos and the obligatory unintelligible chant. This is art-rock mitigated by ethnicity, and unlike the usual capital-p Primitivist or capital-a Authentic fare, Saqqara Dogs' debut slogs along with guileless charm. This is adventurous music that doesn't beg for liner notes.

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This One



8BSU-BSE-UJUC

Joan Jett has found it in a Gibson guitar, a black leather jacket, and in the faces of those who still believe rock 'n' roll can change the world.

THE PROMISED LAND

Article by Daisann McLane

Photography by Beth Baptiste

There is a lot of kindness and compassion in rock 'n' roll. That may sound strange, but it's true.

—Kim Fowley, former manager of Joan Jett and the Runaways

Twenty degrees and ice everywhere you look and Joan Jett is sitting on the steps of her tour bus parked outside the stage entrance of the Palace Theater in Albany, New York; the bus door's wide open. "Okay you guys," the road manager's saying. "Joanie! It talk to everybody, but you gotta get in line, right?" A hundred farm-fed faces in leather jackets, long-haired girls and longer-haired boys, huddle into a queue, and they wait. It's Tuesday night, and the only other action in this town is the tractor-trailers careening down I-190. Twelve, 12:30, and the kids keep up their vigil while Joan signs notebooks, records, headbands, ticket stubs. She's sharp, compact, and she looks you in the eye like she's known you since eighth grade.

"Joan, I'm in a band, and we're trying to rock 'n' roll, but it's hard." This is a girl about 16 who stood in front of Jett all through her show and shouted along to every word of every song the Blackhearts played.

"Yeah, I know it's hard," Joan says in her gravel



Paul Norton/Photo Reserve

"When I rebel, I don't really take it out on anybody, I just rebel. And I think I'm the only one who gets miserable."

rasp that lets you know just how hard. "But the most important thing is to keep playing. Even if ya gotta play for nothin', or almost nothin'."

"That's what you did?"

"Yeah. Plenty of times. Ya gotta keep playin'. 'Cause then, you can get a following. And once you get a following, you can get more gigs, and get a bigger following."

"And then," she smiles, her mouth sneaking up at the corners like a leprechaun-gone-wrong, "once you get a following, nobody can take that away from you. You can do anything."

Do you believe in rock 'n' roll? Do you believe in the magic that'll thrill your soul? Do you still wanna die before you get old?

"I never got over seeing *Jailhouse Rock*," is one of the first things Kenny Laguna, who's managed Joan for the last eight years with his wife Meryl, tells me. "Whoa! And then there was Chuck Berry! And then there was this whole thing. And it became more important to me than politics, more important to me than anything else in this society. Rock 'n' roll. It meant something. It changed my life. It changed a lotta things."

Kenny's at the wheel of a rented Lincoln Continental, Meryl's up front, and me and Joan and seven-year-old Carianne Laguna are scrunching together in the back seat; like mom and dad and the kids in the 'burbs, and this is the way it is for Joan a lot of the time, 'cause she lives with Kenny and Meryl and Cari in Rockville Center, Long Island, when she's not on the road. But we are not on the way to the shopping center, we are going to the Gavin Report seminars at the Westin Hotel in San Francisco, a big schmoozarama of AOR and Top 40 radio and record promotion people.

"It's not a Joan thing to go and do this kind of pro-

motion." Kenny talks fast, and constantly. He started in the business when he was 15, playing keyboards, and writing songs for Tommy James and the Shondells; now he's nearly 40. "In a way this is weird, 'cause you got all these artists on display, y'know: 'Here you guys—touch your artists! You've played the records, now touch the flesh!' But we do this thing on a one-to-one basis constantly with the radio stations when we tour. We live and die by radio. Or we did. Now, with the movie, I think they're gonna give her more respect. Ya see, we're a very mainstream population in America now; a lotta rock 'n' roll ethics are out the window."

Rock 'n' roll ethics?

"Yeah, there was a time when a rock 'n' roll band wouldn't even be on TV if they were a real rock band. Like Led Zeppelin 10 years ago. And if an act endorsed a product, that act was, like, over! I still believe an act's not a rock 'n' roll act after they do commercials. The kids like you for your music, not your taste in Wheaties, right?"

"We get a lotta offers to do that kind of stuff . . . endorsements," Joan says. "And I just can't . . . it doesn't feel right. And when I hear other bands taking their music and making commercials out of it, it just ruins that music for me forever. I get sick inside."

"Why do they do commercials, Joan?" asks Carianne.

"'Cause they make money from it, Cari."

We pull up in the driveway of the hotel, which is swarming with industry types: lizard boots and satin jackets; T-shirts and Rolexes.

"It all makes you wonder," Kenny sighs. "Is this what Elvis fought for?"

Most people remember Joan Jett from her first group, the Runaways, an all-girl rock band that Joan formed under the aegis of impresario Kim Fowley when Joan

was around 15. The Runaways scared the shit out of mainstream America: five teenage girls singing loud, fast, and hard about anger, sex, and lust. Of course they were huge in Japan.

Back home was another story. The Runaways were a sensation. A novelty. People showed up at Runaways gigs to ogle, to gape. Fowley's hype-machine didn't help. "We were being presented as a tits-and-ass band, and we didn't realize it," says Joan.

But Joan was dead serious. A journalist writing about the Runaways called her the "dark soul of the band"; the Keith Richards. One night Rush watched them play from the wings of the stage; Joan saw them laughing. "The assholes! They're assholes, and I don't care if you print that!"

After three albums and one sort-of-hit single, "Cherry Bomb," the Runaways broke up. "I think a lot of what happened was the realization that people weren't gonna accept us. We were starting to see these articles people were writing about us, and you could feel the hatred. It was so deep. I can sort of understand how people feel when they're prejudiced against, whether it's black people or Hispanic people. I know what it's like, people thinking you're no good, not as good as them just because you're a girl."

"We were trying to be equal on all sorts of levels, and we were equal, but it made people uptight. They wanted to know why girls were playing rock 'n' roll, and do you think that the fact that you got female skin makes the strings sound different? Different than what? I mean, I'm tellin' you, people were really askin' us these questions. Like: 'Do you feel like a man or a woman on stage?'"

Things fell apart. The lead singer, Cherie Currie, left the band after touring Japan. The lead guitarist and drummer wanted to go heavy metal, and Joan wanted to stay rock 'n' roll. Joan was finally the one to say, "I quit." "If I didn't quit they were gonna fire

me, and I couldn't deal with getting fired from a band that I started. It was crushing."

She stayed in Hollywood, living on her song royalties in a little place across the street from the Whiskey A Go-Go. She was 18, she was depressed, and she was drunk ■ lot. "I felt like everybody in L.A. whenever I was walkin' around the streets was sayin' 'Ha ha Joan Jett! The Runaways finally broke up.' I felt like those people who hated us were really having a laugh. I was not in very good shape at all, in any sense of the word."

Kenny remembers she walked into the room with a baseball cap on, ripped-up T-shirt and jeans, and looked pretty screwed up. Overweight. Like she'd been drinking. But he thought she was beautiful. She was different from other teenagers, and he decided he'd like to work with her. So he told the guy who was managing Joan at the time, Toby Mamis, that yes, he'd write some songs and try to produce her.

"I was 28 or 29. A little bit old fashioned, not a lot, but a little. So it freaked me out when I asked her in the studio if we could have somebody overdub a little guitar, and she looked at me like . . . like I'd have to beat up ■ woman to do that. I mean, I woulda asked any singer-songwriter, let somebody else come in, lay down the guitar tracks in the studio. But she got so nuts when I suggested it. Said: 'What! I can't play guitar on my own fucking record! Fuck you!' And I thought, what a lot of nerve. If I walk outa here, you're screwed up. Where else are you gonna go right now, this is your best shot, why the attitude? But she just said: 'I'm not making records like that. I'm gonna play on the basic tracks, or there ain't gonna be a record.'"

"Well, I was really impressed by that. I never met ■ girl like this before. I said, 'Joan, I'm gonna help you get ■ record deal.'"

"When I rebel," Joan says, "I don't really take it out

on anybody, I just rebel. And I'm the only one who gets miserable. That's the big difference between me and Patti Rasmick [the character Joan plays in the movie *Light of Day*]. Patti takes everything out on everybody. I like to think I'm a nicer person than that."

"The other thing that was really different is that Patti would play almost any kind of music just to stay on stage, like she went from being in the Barbusters to being in a heavy metal band. I understand that, but I could never do that. I play my three chord rock 'n' roll or I don't go on stage. Patti, I don't think it's fame that she wants, 'cause she says at one point when she's in the metal band, 'Look at these guys, they're dreamin', they think they're gonna be stars. I just go out for the beat.' Well I can relate to that feeling of wanting to be in music for reasons besides becoming a rich star. I'm not in this for the money, but I'm not gonna say I'm not in this to be famous. You wanna be known."

"I mean, it's nice to have money. It's nice to get what you want when you want it. I dunno. . . . I get a lot happier lookin' in people's eyes, seein' 'em think 'Ohmigod she's lookin' at me!' A million people have money, but how many have what I have with the audience? What I have, you can't buy with money. Yeah, it sounds corny. But that's the way I feel."

Kenny and Joan made a single with Steve Jones and Paul Cook from the Sex Pistols in England in 1979, then they cut some more tracks in London at the Who's studio; they got the time on spec 'cause Kenny was doing some work for the Who organization. The single got out in Europe, and got on some U.S. radio stations via the import underground. Even so, when Kenny—who by now was Joan Jett's manager/producer/father/best friend—shopped the album for a U.S. deal, he got rejected by 23 labels. It was Meryl who raised \$5,000 to finance the printing and pressing of

Bad Reputation on their own label, Blackheart. She got the money by emptying out Carianne's college fund.

Joan put an ad in the music classifieds: *Joan Jett looking for three good men to play guitar, bass, and drums. No showoffs please!*, and put together the Blackhearts. She lost some weight and Meryl helped her out with her clothes and makeup. The Blackhearts hit the road. Scuzzy tours in Holland. Dives in the industrial Northeast. Opening act for half the rock attractions in the Western world. Cheap Trick. ZZ Top. The Ramones. The Scorpions. There was no strategy, only the notion that it was better to keep rolling than to stand still. So they rolled.

"We had, Meryl and Cari and Joan and me, almost like what a rock 'n' roll band has, you know, that thing," says Kenny. "That's how we survived. You know, you live together, you share, and that gives you strength. It felt like the same kind of thing as when I was in rock bands in the sixties, and you'd like all live in the same house."

"It's lucky we had this bond, 'cause we wouldn't have gotten through those years. You can picture Carianne growing up on the road, it was wild. But if we had to play a scuzzy bar in Orlando, Carianne would get to see Disney World."

They finally got the *Bad Reputation* album out in the U.S., on Neil Bogart's Casablanca label—Bogart was an old buddy of Kenny's. But Casablanca was a disco, not ■ rock 'n' roll label, and Joan's record "fell in the toilet." So Kenny went back in the studio, and they made another album, *I Love Rock 'n' Roll*. Pay-dirt. The record went multiplatinum, and the title cut was No. 1 on the charts for eight weeks in the summer of 1982.

"I'm really glad I didn't have immediate success," she says. "Like the first thing I did didn't go No. 1. I think



E.J. Camp/ONYX

that would've been too tough. This way, we established a base, and that's really important. If everything went really horrible, I'd still be okay. I could still work. I know we got fans all over the country and all over the world, and we could tour on that for the rest of my life."

This is the life: it's Friday, and she's in San Francisco. Upstairs, she's got a room with a view, candles on the night table, clothes (mostly black) stuffed into a Halliburton that looks like it fell off the back of a few trucks. Downstairs, she's got the Breakfast Buffet, with a complimentary pot of coffee. "This is a pretty nice hotel," she says, like someone who knows hotels.

"She takes after her father," says Meryl, passing the coffee. "She's got that work ethic. Her father started out in the mailroom of an insurance company and now he's the vice president. She's got the same focus."

Joan considers this a minute. "Yeah? You really think so? I guess both my parents were always telling me I could do anything I wanted. Go for your dreams. I remember when I told them I was gonna be in the Runaways, and I had to go to Hollywood every day to rehearse, and they were worried, but they never forbid me to do it. I think they felt they owed it to me, cause that's the way they brought me up. I was lucky. Having your parents' blessing is so important. Maybe not on the surface, but deep down."

"One of the first things Paul Schrader asked me when we were working on *Light of Day* was what kind of relationship did I have with my family. And I told him, great. I don't think that's what he wanted to hear. I think he was hoping that I'd be . . . neurotic."

Impish grin. Clank of metal biker bracelet against orange juice glass. If you're looking for a strung-out tough chick who spits tacks at breakfast, forget it; this is a successful woman, all of 26 years old. Mom and Dad are proud. She picks up the checks.



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Beth Brant '86

**"Having your
parents' blessing is
so important.
Maybe not on the
surface, but
deep down."**

"Was everything all right?" asks the waitress.
"Yeah. It was really good, thank you," says Joan.
"Have a nice day."
A what?!

"I always say that," she laughs. "'Cause it's what
they least expect."

The movie offer came at the perfect time. In the years after *I Love Rock 'n' Roll*, Jett's career had waned again; the next album only went gold, the next one sold less. There were problems between her and her record company, but the main problem was this: Joan Jett played rock 'n' roll, and her core audience was kids. "A lotta the radio stations that played our records started to go for those 'upper demos,' and it got harder for us to get the airplay we used to have," Kenny laments. And it was the "upper demographic" audience—people between the ages of, say, 25 and 35—that the radio stations were trying to sell to.

Still, Joan turned down Paul Schrader's script five times before she decided to take the part of the wayward rock and roller daughter in *Light of Day*. Originally, Schrader had written the role for Bruce Springsteen, and the film was supposed to be called *Born in the U.S.A.* Springsteen didn't want the part, but he liked the title a whole lot. In return for using it, he wrote Schrader a new title song for his movie: "Light of Day."

5/14/86

"It would make me so sad to see it all fade away. It would break my heart. The ideals of rock 'n' roll, how it started, the Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry."

Schrader kept looking for a rock singer to play the part, which had now become a female lead opposite brat pack heartthrob Michael J. Fox. There was one further qualification: Springsteen had final approval over who was gonna sing his song.

Joan didn't want to do it. "I didn't want to play a rock 'n' roll singer in a movie, 'cause I had this thing about people stereotyping me—y'know, thinking I was just playing myself. But the more I read the script, the more I realized this girl wasn't like me. I was gonna have to act." She took the part, hired an acting coach, and got to work.

When the reviews came out on *Light of Day*, almost all of them said the same thing: the movie was so-so, but Joan Jett is a star. She has . . . something. She's a natural.

When the reviews came out, Joan Jett was reading them on her bus with her band, rolling through upstate New York in the dead of winter. "What else are we gonna do?" says Kenny. "Sit around Hollywood and read scripts for six months? We don't think movies are better than rock 'n' roll. To sell out a coliseum as a headliner is a much bigger rush than the whole movie/TV thing, don'tcha think?"

She won't talk to *People* magazine. She won't wear skirts. She makes no compromises, and she's managed to turn her obsession into a way of life that works. Two careers. Two families. A boyfriend. A band. Joan

and Kenny really believe in rock 'n' roll, and they make me wish I could. But like the other upper demos who stand between Joan and another platinum record, I'm too young to understand what converted Kenny for life and too old to believe that the rock 'n' roll nation will rise again. Or even that it ever existed.

Anyway, here we are backstage at the Palace in Albany, and Joan's getting ready to go on. Kenny's pacing back and forth, nervous, bouncing between Joan and the stage manager with her set list, making changes. There are 20 songs on the sheet, everything from old Runaways hits to Jonathan Richman's "Road Runner" to Tommy James and the Shondells' "Crimson and Clover." "Joan, if you get tired, you can always leave one out."

Joan takes about five minutes to get ready. She wears a red leotard with nothing else on but a floppy black leather belt studded with grommets. If she looks boyish, it's mostly because she's got a body that's been molded into shape over the last 12 years by the weight of a Gibson guitar: strong arms, tough chest, slightly rounded back. "Kenny, my stomach hurts so bad!" She just got her period. "It'll feel better once I get out and start to play. It always does."

She grabs a black magic marker from one of the roadies and scrawls a message on the dressing room wall: Joan Jett and ♥ rool.

"Y'know," says Kenny, out of nowhere, "rock 'n' roll is like this flickering light. It's so fragile now, just

hanging on. But I think it's gonna rise again. Of course . . . I've been saying that for the last ten years."

"It would make me so sad to see it all fade away," says Joan. "It would break my heart. The ideals of rock 'n' roll, how it started, the Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry. You want to teach kids about it. You want them to know. They stay home and they watch all these bands on TV. Well, you know that TV can never match what going to a real concert is."

"Like when you wake up that morning, and as soon as you're awake enough to remember, 'Oh, I'm goin' to a concert tonight' you call up your best friend. You get excited, you figure out what you're wearing, you decide where you're gonna meet, and then you meet and you go to the venue, and you see all these other people, and you get more excited. Then the opening act comes on, and you're more excited. And the lights go down and . . . whoa!"

"I wanna make people feel happy like that. Smiling, getting out their anxieties and frustrations, yelling and screaming, fists up in the air. I guess that's what makes me happy. And even in the suckiest of times, I can't picture giving it up."

Loud familiar music rises up from the PA system downstairs. "It's the Who," says Kenny. "We always go on to the Who. You should write that. That's very important." Joan runs down the steps to the stage and Kenny follows. "Yeah . . . and don't forget to write that Joan Jett is the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll, okay?"

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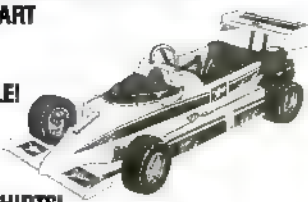
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LITTLE QUEEN HEART
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GO YOUR OWN WAY FLEETWOOD MAC
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FREEBIRD LYNRYD SKYNYRD
FLY LIKE AN EAGLE STEVE MILLER BAND
FEELS LIKE THE FIRST TIME FOREIGNER
DREAMS FLEETWOOD MAC
DON'T STOP FLEETWOOD MAC
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BACK IN THE SADDLE AEROSMITH
SWEET TALKIN' WOMAN FLO
RUNAWAY JEFFERSON STARSHIP
RUNNIN' ON EMPTY JACKSON BROWNE

Seven years after his death, Professor Longhair has a new LP, a CD, and a legend that won't quit.

THE ABSENT PROFESSOR



Michael Smith

Article by Bart Bull

"Fess, he was like one of the main cats of everything." —Dr. John

And that estimate may be too low by half. Fess, Professor Longhair, Henry Roeland Byrd, was a singing, stomping, whistling, yodeling, piano-tickling New Orleans miracle. A dancer, a boxer ("Whirlwind" was his ring name), a cook, a card sharp (coon can was his

game), a friend to all, an enemy to none. Part of a grand tradition of piano professors that struts forth from the saloons and whorehouses of the 19th century, from Jellyroll Morton to Fats Domino to Dr. John, Professor Longhair was always and above all an original.



Even such greats as Robert Plant would come to learn from the master.

DR. JOHN

One time I went over to his pad and he was sittin' in his chair and he had it hooked up where he could turn on the television, the tape recorder, he could operate all the lights and everything, and everything in his whole pad was hooked up to this one chair. He could adjust the chair to where he laid back and all that. But the thing that killed me was he had it hooked up where he could hit a button and spray roach-killer in all the corners.

MRS. ALICE BYRD (Professor Longhair's widow)

When I first met him was back in those jitterbug days. He was playin' the piano, wearin' the piano out. He had so many glasses lined up on the piano he couldn't hardly play it, from his friends settin' him up with Dr. Nut and muscat wine.

DR. JOHN

I mean, even the names of his bands—Professor Longhair and the Shuffling Hungarians! I remember he was sayin' about how he had an Egyptian guitar player. It turned out to be that his Egyptian guitar player was a gypsy guitar player, and it turned out to be that the guy was Hungarian and that's when he named the band.

I remember him one day at a session lookin' over at me and sayin', "Mac, you got too much extortion on your amp." He'd say, "So-and-so composed this tune, but I decomposed it."

JOHN BOUDREAUX (drummer on early Longhair sessions)

Basically he would play two or three, maybe four different rhythms just by himself. He would kick the piano with one foot, play a bass line sort of in half-time, play his right hand in a double-time motion.

And sometimes a triple or quadruple motion. It was sort of like a very hip rumba. That's the only way I can explain it.

REGGIE SCANLAN (Longhair's bass player)

His hands were amazing. When we played, I was always right next to his left hand. I used to like to watch him and it was hard to reconcile because it seemed like one person couldn't be doin' all that at one time. He was really quiet and withdrawn and soft-spoken and everything until he got on the piano and then he just really took over. His playing, to me, was everything.

DR. JOHN

He used to wear a tux with tails with a turtleneck shirt and he had on real beautiful chains and jewelry around his neck. And then he'd wear an Army fatigue cap on his head with a watchband on it.

MRS. ALICE BYRD

You know how the ladies is about musicians. They wild over them all. He was really kinda shy 'bout bringin' me on gigs with him, 'cause he knew my motto: Long as you don't do me nothin', I ain't got nothin' to do to you. But some of 'em is so brazen and all! I wanted to do is be left alone. Do what you want—kiss him, hug him, choke him, do what you want. Mess with him, just leave me alone. 'Cause when the gig is over, I know where he's goin'. He gonna bring me home. And maybe bring some of that money home with him too.

DR. JOHN

He could sing a song like "Bald Head (She Ain't Got No Hair)," and there would be some chicks in the joint that would whip off their wigs just to let him

know there was some baldheads in there.

There was a time I used to see Fess wasn't playin' music. He had gotten busted by this narc called The Beatnik on a Mardi Gras day for sellin' reefer. It wasn't like he was a dealer or somethin', back then it was just a local little thing for the friends. But because of this bust, he wasn't able to play. And he was workin', he'd hustle card games at night, then in the day he'd go and work at like the One-Stop record shop sweepin' the place up. Doin' real de-meaning-type stuff. But even through that time, he never let nothin' get next to him. He'd get on a break and go in the back room and sit down at the piano and start playin' for us. And we'd be like white on rice watchin' his shit.

He'd take these gigs in those days between New Orleans and somewhere in Mississippi, like Gulfport or Biloxi, and I mean he'd play sometime in maybe like a grocery store. He would take these gigs in places where they would literally move the groceries out of the way to make room for people to dance.

He wasn't the kind of guy to go promote his music or even to leave New Orleans, basically. To him back then, goin' on the road was to go to Mississippi. That was about as far as it went and as far as he'd go. He would go in this little weather-whipped-ass car. I remember them comin' back from a gig on the rims. He didn't have no spares and he drove all the way on the rims. And as he was gettin' back to New Orleans, he had to go over an overpass and the car just wouldn't make it. It was like in its death throes. And as the car went up the overpass and wasn't goin' any further, I remember them all jumpin' out of the car and abandonin' it. "Go on home from here, fellas." And they just left the damn thing there. I thought, "These guys are out of their goddamn minds!" But that wasn't an important thing to him at all.

The guys in his bands used to do all those old vaudeville routines but in a rhythm & blues kind of way. The guy would walk the bar with the sax, go in the ladies' room, come out with these big women's underwear on the horn, playin' till he'd pass out. Then they'd do this bit where while the guy's playin' like he's passed out, they would pour a big bottle of whiskey down the guy and it wouldn't faze him, he'd still be passed out. And then they'd blow some smoke in the guy's face, and that wouldn't faze him. And then they'd take the big women's drawers off the saxophone and wave it like a matador in his face and that guy'd come up playin' his ass off.

JOHN BOUDREAU

He made everybody start thinking rhythmically a little different. He was the closest thing to rock 'n' roll because of the rhythms that he played. Of course, he was considered a rhythm & blues player but he did something different from all regular rhythm & blues players.

REGGIE SCANLAN

The regular drummer who was playing with him when we got on the gig, he was some guy from Canada. So we got on the first gig and this guy tells me, he says, "Look, this guy makes a lot of mistakes and doesn't know what he's doin' a lot of times, so just follow me and you'll be all right." And I'm goin', "You gotta be kiddin'!" This is Fess he's talkin' about! Some guy from Canada.

DR. JOHN

He had this other thing with tempos of songs off metronomes like *andante* and *allegro*. He liked *presto* on the metronome—everything was *presto* to him no matter how slow he played it because he didn't use a metronome for time like they're supposed to be used.

He used it as a percussion device, and he'd have *presto* goin' ticka-ticka-ticka-ticka and he'd be usin' that as some other rhythm than what he was playin'.

REGGIE SCANLAN

We were playin' Mobile, Alabama, one time when I was playin' with him. Fess had this big Cadillac, pretty beat up. The guitar player was this guy Big Will Harvey. Before they got into the car, they each had a revolver that they brought into the car with them. And they both rode holding a gun underneath the armrest. And when I asked them why they were doin' that, they said, "Well, we're drivin' through Mississippi. . . ."

ALISON KASLOW (Longhair's manager)

He drove around in his Cadillac giving away money to the people in the neighborhood. One girl told me the day of the funeral that he'd been buying Pampers for her baby, that he'd give her money for diapers every week.

MRS. ALICE BYRD

We had went out one night, and we was in the kitchen fixin' a little snack, and we heard some rumblin' upstairs. So he took his forty-five and I had my little thirty-eight and we went up there. A man had scaled the back porch and got through the window. He holler, "Ooh, I'm in the wrong place at the wrong time." I say, "Oh yeah, you sure is," and I wanted to shoot him in the foot but Fess wouldn't let me. He say, "If you shoot him, you ain't gonna stop shootin' him," and laughed it off.

Fess tells the man, "Now I want you to climb back out this window and go the way you come in." So he got out the window and scaled the back porch again, jumped the shed, and when he got halfway to the alley, that's when Fess stopped him. And he told him,

he said, "Now let me tell you, you go back there and you tell your daddy, your uncle, your brother, your cousin, and your granny about how I'm lettin' you off light but anybody else that come in here, I'm na kill him."

I haven't had a minute's trouble with nobody tryin' to break in my house since.

I got a turban he used to sleep in. And the night he died, he hung it on a lamp. Yeah, he hung it on a lamp—it was cold, you know. His head would be cold, he'd put a skullcap on, then he'd put that turban on.

It was cold down here the day of the funeral. It was so cold. It must have been zero degrees. But there was so many people come out all the same, so many people. When they came to pick me up, the limousine man said, "Mrs. Byrd," he say, "I don't know how I'm gonna get you there. This is the biggest funeral we ever had." They had a jazz funeral, and after they got to Felicity and Rampart my sons had to cut the jazz band loose. There was so many people the cars was just creepin', the limousine wouldn't have never made it to the grave. When we got out there to the cemetery, it was just like carnival—that's how crowded it was out there. Yeah, I'm tellin' you, that was a powerful day.

ALISON KASLOW

I think about him every day. When a person dies, you know, part of their soul becomes part of those closest to him. And part of him is definitely within me [laughs] and I just gotta figure out what to do with it.

DR. JOHN

I also remember a story he told me about when he was in the war, and he said he was behind enemy lines. And I said, "Fess, where were you durin' the war?" And he said, "Shreveport."

FIRE and MAGIC

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ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

True Believers needed to prove themselves on the road; they also needed a roadie. Life on tour with a model American rock 'n' roll band.

I had a pretty funny nightmare last week. I dreamed I was on the road with the True Believers again. I felt wiggly and way desperate, and just before I woke up I asked Brent, the band's second road manager, "How long are we out for this time?" "Oh, not that long," he shrugged. "Five or six weeks."

Aaieeeeeeee!

Actually, I saw the Believers play the other night. Alejandro and Javier in their Iggy leathers and Jon Dee pulling off "Ramblin' Rose" solos to rattle your bones. When I talked to Al later, we smiled like little vagabonds who know each other too well. That was the night they finally kicked Denny out of the band.

So now I work my day jobs, and sometimes I sit on the overpass and watch the cars shoot past on Interstate 35. That highway was the beginning and the end of my roadwork with the True Believers.

From their early days as a rangy Western band to the overdriven guitar locomotive they are today, the Believers have always toured. But in June of 1986, the band began steeling itself for a tour that had Make Or Break written all over it. This campaign across the U.S. and Canada would coincide with the release of the

Believers' debut album on EMI Records, and it seemed like the Big Boys were saying, "Here's your chance, fellas. You break it, you buy it."

And the Believers needed a roadie. After giving me a crash course in guitar tuning and restringing, they hired me on for the three-month jag across America.

Now, when I watch the highway, I flash back on hotels with punch holes in their walls, or the dried blood on Jon Dee's Stratocaster. Mostly I remember driving into the long night, bent to the wheel and cranking up *Funhouse* as the band slept like cadavers in the back of the van.

July 1, 1986
Austin

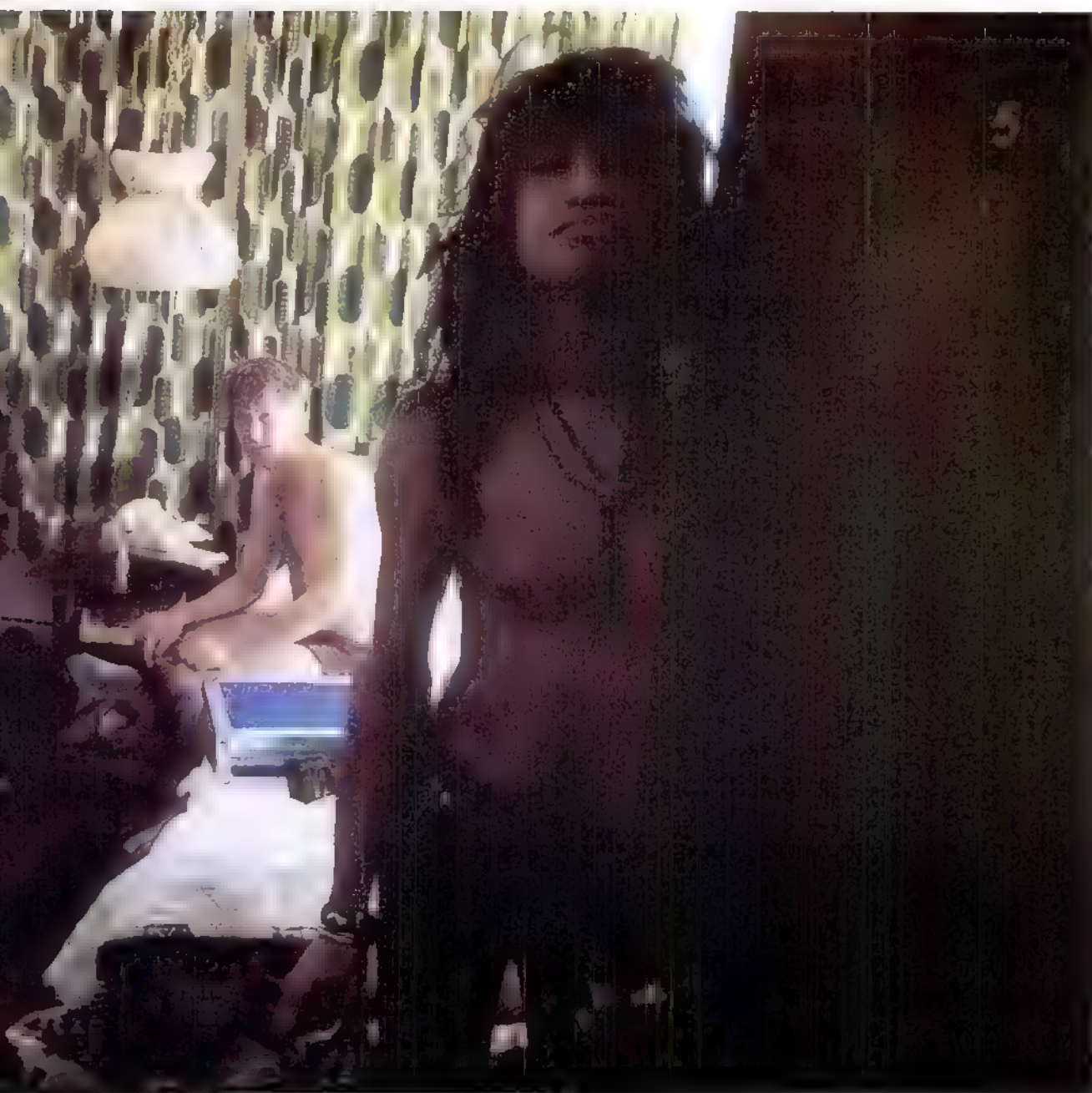
True Believer decibel orgy last night at the Texas Tavern. It was our send-off show.

Jesus, they were snapping guitar strings right and left. Sweat dripped off my nose, rolled into my eyes, and soaked my shirt as I pushed through all my teasing friends and fumbled with the electronic tuner.

They played "Highway to Hell" for an encore and about half the audience grabs the microphone to sing along. Everyone cheered us on like hometown favorites at a bar band pep rally.



*"The record company boys say the True Believers
are the future of EMI America."*



Article and Photography
by Pat Blashill



*"Cocaine party after our show last night
We ended up in this room where Kerouac supposedly
lived, singing Velvets Songs."*

July 3, Little Rock

I drive all night to meet the band in Little Rock. They played last night in Los Angeles and now they'll fly to Arkansas. I've got the van and all the equipment, except their guitars. I am the Road Crew.

In Little Rock at 8 A.M., I get the hotel rooms, take a shower, and drive to the airport to pick up the band. They don't show: missed their first connection.

Okay. I go back to the hotel and have a nice leisurely lunch: breadsticks and linen napkins in the hotel restaurant. White-hot afternoon, I zombie-walk back to my room, crank up the air conditioner, and lay face down on the bed. A Perry Mason rerun drifts out of the TV, and at last I sleep.

I jerk awake at 1:07, and the band is due at the airport in 12 minutes. I splash water on my face, and drive carefully and quickly to the airport. Motörhead blaring full on, sounds good, sounds right.

The band is coming through the concourse, yelling at me immediately.

"Iggy was at our show! The EMI guys creamed!"

Jon Dee is laughing about sleeping on the marble floor of the Houston airport, and Alejandro tells me the record company boys say the True Believers are the future of EMI America.

July 4, leaving
Little Rock

We sit in the van, gassing up at one of those huge trucker pitstops: big black gas pumps, pools of water,

and discarded windshield wipers in the middle of a vast field of concrete. And all around, the smell of our friend gasoline.

Al puts on a Meditations tape and checks the oil. Drummeister Kevin is already asleep, though we've barely gotten out of town. Javier and Denny sit in the back bench seat playing backgammon. The sliding door of the van is open to a warm blowy Independence Day breeze. And then we start driving again.

July 5, Nashville

The True Believers play at half volume to a sedate crowd of young executive hicks. The club asked the band to turn down so the waitresses could hear their customers' drink orders. Nashville Rock City, yeah.

Before they went on, the Believers' road manager advised the band to keep it tame, because, after all, these people did pay their five dollars.

"Yeah," says Al. "But they paid their five dollars to see us!"

Now I watch from the side stage and catch all these humiliated, embarrassed glances from the band, like maybe I'm witnessing the taming of some ferocious beast.

But it gets better. They start quiet and slow, but work those knobs up enough to end with a loud original called "She's Got": all three guitars driving a chugging riff like a railroad spike. They're smiling at each other now, because they know they've beat the rap.

July 7, leaving
Louisville

Cocaine party after our show last night. We ended up in this room where Kerouac supposedly lived, singing Velvets songs, our voices all cracked and hoarse from line after line of coke.

Alejandro's eyes bugged out, and he had this look on his face like, You feel it too, don't you? Jon Dee seemed dazed and mind-wandering. My teeth were on edge, but I felt like I was wrapped in cotton. And our party hosts, this gawky guy Willy and his very skinny girlfriend, they'd just chop up another line. . . .

The tour progresses. To these power chord veterans, I am obviously the Kid. Babysitter Mike is the persistent asshole; he doesn't have time for fun because he's too busy waking up the band, calling the clubs, driving, handling the money, setting up the microphones, hauling equipment. Jon Dee was a guitar mangler in a half-dozen Austin bands before he became the third and latest brick in the Believers' wall of angry guitars. He is stonefaced and solitary much of the time, and he likes to drive. Bass man Denny bought a bottle of sherry, drank it all, and passed out before we'd driven an hour today. Now he's awake and ready for a sound check. His motto is Rest and Roll. Kevin is lucky to be alive. He spent so many of

Denny and Javier backstage in Philadelphia, a pit stop on the True Believers' highway to hell.

his years crawling through a nightclub gauntlet of drugs and liquor, but somehow he finally managed to turn his life around. Now he can't eat much more than rice cakes and almond butter, let alone drink or smoke, but he's a monster drummer. Javier is this precious punk cowboy, dressed to kill and sliding through his life like it's all so easy. Jav's guitar makes that slash and burn noise. And Javier's brother Alejandro? Al is the Man. He does most of the interviews, he charms the fans, and he pushes the band forward with twin streaks of real warmth and carefully aimed hostility. He's got a wife and three daughters, and the True Believers may be on the road for the rest of their lives.

July 12

Grumpy, fucked-up morning in crumbling-down Washington, D.C.

Last night, we smoked at the 9:30 club. But this morning, manager Mike is pissed at everyone. Pissed at Jon for leaving a suitcase at the club, pissed at Al and Javier because they stayed with two Gina Lollabrigida girls last night.

Denny punctuates the gloom over his hangover asides. We drive by a pile of throwaway cardboard boxes and Denny gets all excited; he wants us to stop and pick them up.

"Yeah, now I can build myself a shelter no matter what town we're in," he says.

"You know, I did way too much coke last night," Denny says now, even though there was barely any pot backstage last night.

"I got down so far, I had to do crack just to get back up. I had three prostitutes in the van with me, and they looked just like the Supremes."

July 13, Dover, Delaware?

We drive by an outdoor barbecue party, and every-

body wants to stop and eat. Steam and smoke, white fog, floating around afternoon silhouettes in overalls and John Deere caps. Looks like good food. Mike says we don't have time to stop.

"We can't have any fun on this tour," Al says from behind me.

Mike bites his lip, and we drive by the place, hooking ass to make Philadelphia in time for 7:30 sound check.

July 14, 4:02 a.m.

Everyone is completely crocked. An hour ago, we were in Philadelphia, drinking after the show. I had to drag Denny out of there by his arms. Al and Javier and even Jon Dee, all watery-eyed from the bartender's cognac.

But Jon is driving now; feed him AC/DC and coffee and he's a machine. Javier puts on his magic skull shirt, particularly appropriate as we shoot down the death highway to NYC. In the back of the van, Denny is wedged head-first into the hatch above the equipment and luggage. We all know he scored a joint from the girl at the bar, so I squeeze up beside him and search for it: I check behind his ear, in his shoe, his pockets. No soap.

"I can't believe you're rolling Denny to find a joint," grumbles Mike with his sour old face.

Oh well. I crawl back to my seat, and Jon tells me to put on the belt. Our headlights beam across the yellow dashes, and I think about Austin. Dream about. . .

Pass out and wake up at a Roy Rogers rest stop. I get out of the van, walk in, and stare at the vending machines: fingernail clippers and toothbrush kits. I don't know what I want.

I go back to the van, try to go back to sleep, struggle to keep from vomiting, try to forget the Philly beer and cognac, sleep, sleep.

When I wake up again, Kevin is punching me in the shoulder and we're coming out of a tunnel, and it's just like Jon said: another planet, tall buildings, it's not sleeping. All my life I've heard about this place, and suddenly I wake up here, and there's nothing but this city.

July 16, NYC

Denny has been arrested. He went to pick up his laundry this afternoon, and apparently stopped somewhere to buy drugs. Pot, or maybe something harder. The police won't say.

Mike has gone to try to get him out, but he called to say Denny would not be making the gig tonight. Half of EMI's New York office set to show up tonight, and we have to find a bass player.

The police won't even tell us where they've jailed him.

midnight, July 17
still in New York

Alejandro and I mumble around in Area, big-deal New York disco. The people here aren't that beautiful, the bar, in and of itself, not so wild. I'm sure a Budweiser costs about a hundred bucks.

Al goes to the phone every ten minutes to call Jim's to see if Mike has gotten Denny out of jail yet. The line's always busy.

Finally we just walk home. The van is parked outside of Jim's building, so Mike must be back with Denny. But when I get upstairs, I don't see him. He must be sleeping in the van.

Denny sleeps in the doghouse.

July 18, leaving
the city

I sit on Jim's stoop, waiting for Javier and Al to finish their glam primping, waiting to load up the van so we

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"I had three prostitutes in the van with me and they looked just like the Supremes."

can start for Boston, and watching Denny scramble around, trying to reenter the warm world of the True Believers.

Al and Javier have ignored him; Jon Dee is icy and hostile, Kevin talks to him a little, but finally Denny sits down with me because he says I'm the only one who'll speak to him.

He tried to buy a joint in Washington Square and got caught in a drug sweep. He tells me jail horror stories: scary faces, guys handcuffed to the cell ceilings. He says it was the most horrible 30 hours of his life.

six a.m., July 23rd
Toronto

Party in our hotel room.

Everything was fine, just fine. This big-hat Canadian cowboy named Zack was picking adrenalin country jigs, Al was drifting around, trading road stories with Rhett from Guadalcanal Diary (who we opened for tonight), Javier sat in a corner with that quiet glaze smirk. Denny was muttering about some imagined offense; he says "Fuck Everybody!" like a sauced Shemp Howard. I was writing notes to this pretty French girl, beer was drinking, hash wafting . . . and the cowboy had stopped playing but I couldn't remember where he'd gone.

Suddenly someone comes out of the bathroom and says Zack is in trouble, man, and now we're all in a scene from every stupid Star Is Born tragedy. Some guy Jake is trying to lift Zack up from the wet bathroom tile, he says help me, help him up, and oh man, Zack might as well be a bag of new cement. "Does anyone know CPR?" someone cries, and now Jake is dropping Zack again: "He's turning blue! I gotta get out of here," Jake whimpers. Javier figures it out: "You do this to him," he yells at Jake. Zack's friend Billy is bent over him, pinching his nose and blowing into Zack's mouth, blowing, huffing, squeezing air into a gaping mouth. Jake tries to escape again, but Javier fucking kicks him and says, "You ain't going nowhere, dude. This is your problem."

Zack's eyes flicker open. Billy slaps him hard in the face.

"C'mon, Zack, don't leave me yet!" he says.

Zack mutters something, and Al and Billy pick him up and try to make him walk. Billy punches him, says "C'mon you fat fuck, walk!" and Zack manages a

step. They haul him down the hallway, out of our room, our lives. Jake, he's the one that shot cowboy up, and now he's grabbing some of our beers to take with them, says Zack will need them. Liar.

What a fucked-up stupid scene. Christ, will this tour just sit still for a second?

August 10, Santa Fe

Ahh, yeah!

The walls of Club West shake and shudder as the Believers come around the bend. Alejandro sings the first verse then hunches over his Strat, slashing and ripping at That Chord. Javier comes in with the breathy second verse. Kevin throws his head back and wails on his snare, and Jon Dee rushes the front of the stage for his solo; he's an iceman, you better stay out of the way. Denny wears his diablo goatee grin, thrumps his bass, and motions me to get him a new pair of pants, because he just shit in his.

August 29, Manitoba

"Friendly Manitoba" is the provincial motto around here.

They should change it to "Get the Hell Out of Canada, Boy."

Last night we played in the basement lounge of a hooker hotel. Now we're leaving the country in a big hurry because we're illegal. Last night's promoter didn't bother to renew our visas. Immigration is looking for us at the club, and they probably know which hotel we're staying at. Heaving my stuff into the van, trying to be discreet, when up drives a late-model Chevy and out steps Mr. Suit.

9:30 p.m.

Well, Immigration was all right, but this border is Gestapoville. We got boned by currency exchange rates, then booted through the border after a humiliating search and interrogation.

At last we are again chugging down the U.S. highway, with ZZ Top blaring from the tape deck. Thank you, Sam.

September 2, bye bye
Lincoln

Last night was the worst. It was one of those shows with a paying attendance of 15, where ten leave after the second song. It was one of those "let's get this set done quick so we can go back to the hotel, walk

around in our underwear, and watch bad TV documentaries." Brent had to argue with the club owner just to get our pay guarantee.

This morning we sit in the van and listen to Brent on the phone with Believers headquarters in Austin.

Then he gets in the van to bum everyone out again. Good news: we are getting paid salary this week. Bad news: we're only getting half of what we were promised.

Now the skies open up, and yeah, it's raining pretty hard now. Brent, we're not even gonna listen to you anymore. Because it's always bad, and then Jon and Al just stare straight ahead in their mirrored sunglasses.

September 30, Columbia,
South Carolina

I lie in my clean-sheet hotel room, and toss and turn with the same questions all night long. Where are we? Have we already played? Who is sleeping beside me? Jon? Denny?

The band slogs on. Short tempers, "fuck you's" at the drop of a hat, and Javier is touchy today because the van is too crowded or the drive is too long.

Stay with it. Walk it off. These have become the slogans of the tour. Month No. 3, and we're all going crazy out here.

October, 3, Charlottesville,
Virginia

I sit in the Blue Moon Cafe, knocked senseless by a kickass breakfast, listening to "Lay Lady Lay" on the jukebox and wandering my gaze out the window.

Across the street, Alejandro plods along like a man who's just lost his family. His ruffled blue shirt hangs limply from his chest, and his eyes are so dull. . . .

October 12, 22 miles
from Tennessee

After touring for almost four months, we are going home. We were due to stay out until Halloween. Ha ha. But Al, Jon, and the others have decided to cut it short. We've proved we can work. Does banging your head against the wall make you a bigger man?

Last night, we played Boston. After a short, jubilant set, the Believers played one encore: "Ramblin' Rose." And the club, worried about losing their license for staying open too late, hustled the True Believers off-stage.

Everyone was hugging each other. Jon was so happy to be done with it. Denny kept telling me "I don't want to go home, really I don't."

So now we drive and drive. Soon we'll stop for more food and maybe some beer. It's a long drive, but it goes quick enough: sleep and drive, sleep and drive.

Javier and Alejandro Escovedo, in yet another dressing room on yet another stop on the True Believers' 1986 tour.

SPIN

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**SPIN. AIN'T TOO PROUD
TO BEG.**

At 24, Steven Carr decided to join the contra war in Nicaragua to make up for the one his brother lost in Vietnam. Soon, he found himself in a White House-backed network, smuggling guns with cocaine dealers. Last spring, he wanted out and began to talk to a U.S. Senator. Today, he is dead.

CONSPIRACY OF HOPELESSNESS

Article by Dennis Bernstein and Vince Bielski

Painting by Sam Bayer

"Either we live by accident and die by accident—or we live by plan and die by plan . . ."

—Thornton Wilder,
The Bridge of San Luis Rey

On a humid morning in May, 1984, two dozen anxious reporters from seven countries were on their way from Costa Rica to a press conference called by contra leader Eden Pastora at his guerrilla base camp, in La Penca, Nicaragua.

For weeks before the hastily called press conference, Pastora had been feuding bitterly with the CIA over their insistence that he unite with the Honduras-based Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the largest contra faction fighting to overthrow the ruling Sandinista government. Pastora refused to align with the FDN because its leadership was comprised mostly of former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard, who were still despised by most Nicaraguans because of their brutality during the reign of the dictator, Anastasio Somoza.

Among the group of journalists was a newcomer to Costa Rica, who called himself Per Anker Hansen and carried an oversized camera bag. Several weeks earlier Hansen told Swedish broadcaster Peter Torbjörnsson that he was a fledgling freelancer from Denmark trying to get an interview with Pastora.

At the jungle camp, as the reporters clamored for answers, Hansen placed his aluminum "camera box" on the floor near Pastora, snapped a few photos, and slowly backed away.

Suddenly the camera case exploded and a huge bolt of blue light filled the room. When the screams of men and women faded, three journalists and five contra guerrillas lay dead or dying and 18 others were wounded. Pastora survived, but the incident marked the end of his career as the leader of the contras' southern front. Also wounded was American journalist Tony Avirgan,

whose partner and wife, Martha Honey, began to investigate the bombing.

When it was disclosed in early 1984 that CIA divers had placed mines in Nicaragua's main port and that a CIA assassination manual had been translated into Spanish and distributed to the guerrillas, an enraged Congress banned all further aid to the contras.

To circumvent the restrictions imposed by Congress, Ronald Reagan's National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane put an obscure aide on the staff of the National Security Council in charge of providing covert aid to the counterrevolutionaries. Lt. Colonel Oliver North worked feverishly in the basement of the White House constructing a covert arms network.

With a bit of savvy the bright-eyed, born-again colonel merged his terrorist program with "Project Democracy," a





Edward Cohen

wide-ranging program introduced several years earlier with great fanfare by President Reagan to "foster the fragile flower of democracy" and inspire democratic institutions worldwide.

The covert network involved current and former CIA and U.S. military officials, and arms merchants who set up corporate fronts and secret offshore bank accounts to finance and supply the Nicaraguan contras and a series of other right-wing armies fighting around the globe.

A key figure in the network was George Morales, one of the biggest drug dealers in South America. Before his conviction in 1986 for cocaine trafficking and income tax evasion, the stocky, dapper, 38-year-old Colombian owned a fleet of planes, was a world champion speedboat racer, and was a contributor to presidential campaigns from Panama to Mexico.

In 1984, Morales cut a deal with the CIA. To avoid getting caught arming the contras during the congressional ban on such aid, the CIA turned to drug smugglers like Morales who had their own planes and pilots with which to fly weapons to the guerrillas. In exchange, the CIA opened up hidden airstrips in northern Costa Rica as refueling stops for the smugglers and provided them with information on how to beat the complex radar traps when entering the United States with their illegal cargo.

According to a source involved with a congressional investigation into contra drug smuggling, who



Merch Robinson

spoke to us on the condition we didn't name him, Morales "realized the strategic importance of the northern Costa Rican airports for his business" and developed an independent relationship with the contra southern front.

"He used the network for his own good and the network used his financial capabilities to help them. Many of the contra leaders in Costa Rica would come to Miami and meet with Morales to discuss ship-

Above: Steven Carr during an interview at La Relorma prison in Costa Rica. Left: Demonstration against U.S. military intervention in Nicaragua.

ments with him," said the source. When the CIA officials found out, "They told him that they appreciated what he was doing and then sanctioned it. He dealt with people in the agency in Costa Rica, and he dealt with them on a first-name basis. He can reel off their names. People you and I wouldn't know."

"I was supplying aircraft and pilots, and other financial support," Morales told SPIN. "We were flying from Florida to Ilopango [a military base in El Salvador] and then to Costa Rica. . . . The word came down from Washington about what had to be done."

Morales says he arranged for perhaps as many as 20 weapon shipments to Costa Rica in 1984 and 1985, and with the assistance of the CIA smuggled thousands of kilos of cocaine into the United States.

Morales readily admits that several shipments of weapons to the contras were financed by the sale of cocaine. According to the congressional source, during the time of his "partnership" with the "North network," Morales was funneling \$250,000 of drug money quarterly to contra leader Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro. "The word came down that it didn't matter" how you got the money for weapons, said Morales, "as long as they were delivered so you could support the contras to fight the communists." Asked if he ever saw cocaine loaded on the planes alongside the weapons, Morales replied, "If I tell you no, I will probably be lying, if I tell you yes, I will probably be killed."

In 1985, one of Morales's pilots, Gary Betzner, was arrested by drug enforcement agents in Florida after arriving with a large shipment of cocaine and was convicted and sent to jail. Betzner told SPIN he flew two shipments of arms of about 2,000 pounds each from southern Florida to dirt airstrips in northern Costa Rica. "I was nothing more than a pilot. The

Soon after he joined the contras, Carr became involved in a plot to kill the U.S. Ambassador in Costa Rica.

arms were already on board. I boarded the aircraft, taxied the runway, and left. It was about 11:30 at night. When I arrived the next morning, people were there to meet me and offload the weapons. I then loaded 500 kilos of cocaine onto the aircraft and returned to Lakeland, Florida."

To carry out the grunt work of private warmaking, collecting and shipping guns, training the contras, and—to fund this secret pipeline—smuggling cocaine into the United States, the "North network" needed foot soldiers. It was into this world of covert operations that Steven Carr stepped in January, 1985, when he arrived at the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge on Miami's west side.

He was 27, a tall kid, brown hair framing a round, open face of sweet, suburban innocence. "I'm sorry for making myself and you unhappy," Steven Carr wrote to his mother in 1984. "There were many nights I've been high, praying to be arrested, so I could get away from the madness."

The "madness" was, in part, Carr's troubled childhood. His father, Ed Sr., had followed his own rising star at IBM, moving the family from one temporary residence to the next in pursuit of another promotion. When Steven was seven years old his mother, tired of the transient executive life, took her children to settle in Naples. The insecurity caused by his parents' separation haunted Carr.

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BE ALL YOU CAN BE, BUT BE THERE.

Then his older brother Ed returned from Vietnam, bitter. Steven was fascinated by his vivid portrayal of a war where the privates did the dying because the sheltered officers never gave them the latitude they needed to win.

Steven was a strong, sensitive teenager, somewhat on the heavy side, and a bit self-conscious. But he never had any trouble finding friends. Carr did, however, have a great deal of difficulty with his classes at Naples High, and repeated ninth grade three times. His friends recall that he was bright but did not do well in the strict school setting. "Steven was much more interested in experiencing life," said one friend, "than studying it in books. He was anxious to go out and live."

A hidden longing nagged at Steven Carr. He was determined to find a war that he could win—for his brother. And to prove himself. Carr eventually quit school and successively joined the Army, the Navy, and the Merchant Marine. But after five years of bouncing from one service to the next, he had gotten nowhere. Carr moved back to Naples and worked as a carpenter for a while. But he grew restless and became entangled in the Naples underworld.

Carr drifted into working for a local drug lord, travelling between Naples and the backstreets of Miami, stopping at Miami International and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood airports to pick up shipments of cocaine from Colombia. But Carr's craving for the drug led to his stealing a sizable shipment of it from his boss, who found out and threatened to kill him. Desperate for money, Carr sold his mother's gold jewelry and forged her signature on 17 of her personal checks.

Carr's mother got to the point where she didn't know what to do. Finally, she had her son arrested. He was convicted of grand larceny and spent the next four months in jail, emerging from prison confused and looking for direction. Captivated by a Ronald Reagan speech on TV calling for Americans to support the "freedom fighters in Nicaragua," in which the President said, "I'm a contra, too," Steven Carr decided to join the contras in Central America. Through a friend of the family, a wealthy farmer in Costa Rica, he was introduced to the contra organization in Miami. He was 24 years old and was leaving home with a purpose, for a cause. He finally had a reason for living.

Only a few minutes from the Miami airport, the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge served as a safehouse for operatives in the "North network" (they received a special contra discount rate of \$17 a night) and as a command post for organizing fundraising drives in the Cuban community and for recruiting mercenaries.

From Miami came the weapons and explosives, military trainers, pilots, and cocaine, and the "street smarts" needed to make the North network function. In the early '60s the CIA had assembled a terrorist cadre of political operatives and mobsters in Miami to assassinate the newly triumphant Fidel Castro and invade Cuba. The CIA trained over 2,000 Cuban exiles in terrorist tactics for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Twenty years later, after continuing their terrorist acts against "communist" targets in Miami and Cuba, the Bay of Pigs veterans and their younger protégés remained active and ready for whatever task the CIA could conjure.

Carr began his work with the contras by collecting weapons from local Cuban-American contra supporters, but soon he became involved with more complex plotting. One morning in February, 1985, Dade County correctional officer Jesus Garcia stopped by the hotel. A handsome, well-built Vietnam vet, Garcia was deeply involved with the Miami Cuban underground as a liaison between anti-Castro organizations and the North network. He found Carr in the hotel bar with two other mercenaries, Robert Thompson, a 22-year-old Florida highway patrol-



Hugh Graham

Restless after weeks of training and waiting to go to war, Carr ignored orders and went on an ill-fated ambush against a Sandinista outpost.

man, and Sam Hall, the brother of U.S. Congressman Tony Hall. Inside the dimly lit room, Carr told Garcia of a Machiavellian plot of stunning audacity.

Carr showed Garcia a floor plan of the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica. "He said the plan was to hit the U.S. Embassy in Costa Rica, kill Ambassador Lewis Tambs, and blame it on the Sandinistas," said Garcia. "The U.S. government would be mad as hell and invade Nicaragua."

The mercenaries planned to plant a bomb in an electrical box on a light pole near the embassy compound. The explosion would kill a number of U.S. citizens as well as Tambs. If Tambs survived the blast, gunmen stationed outside the embassy exit would cut him down in a crossfire during the ensuing chaos. A Nicaraguan member of the hit team would also be killed, and in his pocket the mercenaries would place papers identifying him as a Sandinista officer, thus implicating the Nicaraguan government in the act.

Garcia was stunned.

"I couldn't believe that Carr was talking about this in front of the barmaids. He was like an excited little kid. He didn't know what he was getting himself into with this group. Hey, I love this country, but I'm not going to kill an American."

"What about the women and children who would be killed in the blast?" Garcia asked Carr.

"Hey, Jesus, this is war. This is war. That's what he said."

And Steven Carr was determined to be part of the war—at its center.

In early March, the Miami network pooled its resources collecting money and guns for a major arms shipment. The weapons were stored in a home used by suspected drug dealer Francisco Chanes in a residential neighborhood in south Miami. According to court documents, Chanes was the owner of two Miami-based seafood importing companies, through which he smuggled thousands of pounds of cocaine into the United States. Carr, Thompson, Garcia, and other mercenaries, arrived in the early morning to load the weapons to be taken to the Fort Lauderdale International Airport. Stashed in a bedroom were automatic rifles, M-16s, two 60mm mortars, a machine gun, and a 14-foot-long 20mm cannon.

As the others talked, Carr snooped around the house. In one of the bedrooms he opened a dresser drawer and found three kilos of cocaine.

"Hey, Jesus, look at this," Carr said, holding up the cocaine.

"I told Carr to close the drawer," said Garcia. "He was getting close to some dirty business."

In a closed garage, the men loaded the weapons into a van. Anxious to be at the forefront of the operation, Carr insisted on driving the van to the airport.

On March 6, a chartered plane took off with its cache of weapons. Hours later it landed at the Ilopango air force base in El Salvador. The plane was met by a Salvadoran Army colonel, whose men unloaded the arms and placed them on trucks in the presence of "Seven American Air Force personnel," Carr would later reveal. "They didn't say a word. Like it happened every day."

After a week's holdover in El Salvador, Carr and the other mercenaries boarded a commercial flight to Santa Maria Airport outside of San José, Costa Rica. Carr saw the misty green, low-lying mountains that surround the huge central valley in which San José is nestled. Charged with nervous excitement, Carr set off from the airport to the contra war zone.

On the three-hour drive north to Ciudad Quesada, through the rolling hills of coffee trees, sugar cane, and cadres of fieldworkers, sickles belted to their sides, Steve Carr was thinking about becoming a hero—and John Hull would be his ticket to the front lines.

Hull was an imposing 6'3", with dark, leathery skin and hard brown eyes. In the late '60s, Hull and his father had left Indiana for Costa Rica in search of fertile farm land. Hull amassed major holdings in northern Costa Rica, and his economic clout in the region had become legendary.

Hull owned a 2500-acre cattle ranch, a citrus farm, and timber operations that bordered the tiny hamlet of Muelle. Through his company he managed more than 25,000 acres of farmland for absentee American landowners, mostly in the northern part of the country near Nicaragua.

He also controlled the nearby town of Muelle, according to Canadian journalist Hugh Graham, who visited Hull in 1984 and told us that the town is "like a feudal village." To prevent easy access to Hull's land, the private road into the estate took a circuitous five-mile route, crossing a river and looping back around several times as it led to the main ranch. It was lined by miniature palm trees and a handful of shacks that housed Hull's laborers and cowboys.

The road ended at Hull's hacienda, with large open verandas, arches, and wrought-iron railings. It was guarded by armed men and "a gardener who carried an Uzi." Graham has a distinct memory of the first night he spent on the ranch. "As soon as it got dark, they took their guns from behind this trashy little mobile cocktail bar and someone said, 'Welcome to contra country.'"

Hull's massive farm combine along the Nicaraguan border was the perfect military base. Many of the farms had their own airstrips and were connected by

radio communications equipment. Military training camps and clandestine hospitals had been set up on the farms. Weapons and military supplies were routinely flown in from Miami and Ilopango. Hull had once boasted to mercenary Jack Terrell that "Nothing moves along the border without my knowledge."

Hull, who has been described as the commander of the Costa Rican branch of the FDN, was reportedly expanding the contra army in Costa Rica. Carr, Thompson, and three other mercenaries—Peter Glibbery, who had just finished a two-year stint fighting with the South African army; John Davis; and Frenchman Claude Chiffard—were brought in to train the small army of about 50 contras with the weapons from the March 6 shipment.

Confident he could trust his team of mercenaries, Hull talked about his connections to powerful people in the U.S. government. "He told me that he was getting at least \$10,000 a month from a friend of his on the National Security Council," said Carr. "He said the money was deposited in his bank in Miami and transferred to Costa Rica. He said, 'And God help me if the IRS finds this money because I will not be able to explain it.'"

Hull's ranch was a depot at the end of the line for weapons shipped through the "North network." From Washington, Oliver North was able to monitor the delivery of weapons through his personal liaison to the contras, Robert Owen. On Hull's ranch, according to court papers, Owen would take orders for weapons and pass on political advice from Washington. The Tower Commission report describes several meetings among North, Owen, and Hull and reveals a letter written by North's secretary Fawn Hall, at the bottom of which North had sketched a diagram linking him to Owen. Under Owen's name was written the word "weapons." In late March, Owen arrived at Hull's ranch at the same time as a portion of the weapons from the March 6 shipment.

During the period when Hull was meeting with Owen and North to facilitate arms shipments, he was also involved in a lucrative business deal with the cocaine trafficker George Morales. According to a source involved in the congressional investigation into contra drug smuggling, not only did Hull allow Morales to use his private airstrip to ship large quantities of cocaine, but on numerous occasions Hull

stored the drugs on land he controlled, for which he was paid handsomely.

Carr told Jack Terrell that he was put in charge of guarding 13 to 16 kilos of cocaine packed into a box sitting on Hull's airfield, waiting to be loaded into a plane and flown to the United States. "At first, Carr didn't know what was in the box," said Terrell, "but knowing Steve, he looked in the box and saw the cocaine."

In the jungle camps, Carr and the mercenaries began teaching the contras how to use automatic weapons and mortars. "We are trying to organize the fighters and will soon visit our commie friends with a hell of a lot of good will," Carr wrote his mother. The brutal guerrilla war was claiming the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. Then something happened that ended Carr's hypnotic fascination with the war.

In March, 1985, according to Carr and Glibbery, Hull laid out a plan for the mercenaries to kill several Sandinista soldiers in Nicaragua and bring their bodies to the Costa Rican border town of Los Chiles. Then, said Carr, "Hull told us to use the cannon to lob some mortars into Los Chiles and leave some dead Sandinistas around 'as evidence of a Nicaraguan invasion.' "Hull said it word for word, right to my face. This is the kind of stuff he wanted." Something had changed in Carr. Though still eager to fight, he wasn't anxious to participate in terrorism.

Owen ordered Hull to hold off from any military operations while a debate raged in Congress over sending \$14 million in "humanitarian" aid to the contras. The deaths of any more civilians at the hands of the contras would impede passage of the bill. Hull ordered the mercenaries to stay put, but restless after weeks of training and waiting, Carr ignored him, seeing what he hoped was the opportunity he had been waiting for—a chance to go into battle.

In mid-April, Carr, a Cuban-American mercenary, and 17 contras set out for an ambush in La Esperanza, a Sandinista Army outpost about four miles inside Nicaragua. A cattle truck dropped Carr's unit near the Nicaraguan border, and a scout from the Costa Rican Rural Guard guided them to the crossing point. With Carr leading the way, they reached the rugged terrain just outside the military post at La Esperanza, set up their mortars, and waited until dusk.

When the Sandinistas sat down to dinner, the contra brigade opened fire on the surprised soldiers, who regrouped and returned fire. Carr and his troops retreated to the forest and ran for their lives toward the Costa Rican border.

Early reports received by Hull said that Carr had been killed in the attack. Anger welled up in him as he pondered the possible consequences in Washington. Carr, however, was alive and thrilled by his first taste of battle.

But the timing of the raid was disastrous. Within days, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto denounced Costa Rican President Luis Monge, calling for the arrest of those involved in border provocations. Worse, the contra aid bill was defeated in Congress.

Early on the morning of April 24, 16 Rural Guard officers arrested Carr and the others who had participated in the raid on La Esperanza.

As the mercenaries passed through the rickety metal gate of La Reforma prison, they were confident it had all been a mistake. Before their arrival, Carr had reached Hull by phone, and had been told they would be taken care of. The mercenaries were charged with violating Costa Rica's neutrality and possessing ex-

plosives. Three weeks later, they began to doubt Hull's promise.

"He first showed up on visiting day on Sunday three weeks after we were picked up," recalled Glibbery. "He assured me he would be getting us out in two weeks. After two months, we called him again and told him 'You've been two-weeking us for the last ten weeks. Get us out of here or we are going to the press.' He said, 'No, no, don't do that. If you go to the press, you'll harm your chances in court and you'll stay in jail for lots of years.' " After several more weeks, Carr said, "We decided to talk to help ourselves."

From the moment they heard of Carr's arrest, reporters Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan tried unsuccessfully to get him to talk. Now Carr was ready to talk. Avirgan had spent a painful two months in the hospital recovering from the injuries he suffered in the La Penca bombing. After his release, he joined Honey in what became an exhaustive investigation into who was responsible. They were misled by Costa Rican officials and got no cooperation from the U.S. Embassy. By June of 1985, they suspected the bombing was the work of a "dirty tricks" team from the FDN, linked to John Hull.

From Carr and Glibbery they learned that Hull claimed to be working for both the CIA and the National Security Council. Were these agencies involved at La Penca?

In late spring of 1985, Avirgan and Honey got another big break when Hull's personal assistant and driver, a Nicaraguan contra named David, backed out of the "dirty tricks" team and decided to talk to Honey and Avirgan. Through a trusted intermediary, Carlos Rojas, David spun a grim tale of a terrorist team, based on a farm managed by Hull, that had planned the bombing in meetings in Miami and Honduras. Present at these meetings were Hull, FDN leader Adolfo Calero, "two Miami-based Cubans, Felipe Vidal and Rene Corbo . . . and a Robinson Harley, a North American who was identified by the group as being from the CIA . . . \$50,000 was passed from the CIA through the FDN for expenses in the bombing operation." David and other sources involved in the planning of the La Penca bombing told Avirgan that killing journalists and then blaming it on the Sandinistas was part of the plan. The "dirty tricks" team, David told the reporters, was now plotting to bomb the U.S. Embassy in San José. On the morning of May 26, Avirgan and Honey's story in the *Sunday Times* of London exposed the embassy plot.

Two months after the story broke, David and Rojas were kidnapped at gunpoint as they stood in front of a bar in San José. Called "traitors" by their abductors, they were driven to a contra camp near Hull's ranch house. Both managed to escape, but according to a Costa Rican government informant planted among the contras, David was recaptured, tortured, and killed.

When word spread that he was talking to reporters, prison life for Carr grew tougher. He wrote his mother that the U.S. embassy had begun "to spread the word to everyone that I am lying about all my charges against the U.S. and Costa Rica." Carr said that, perhaps as punishment, the embassy was helping to make life miserable. "I have no way to get food or soap or toilet paper or anything. The embassy just doesn't care. It's very hard to post mail. I either have to smuggle it out or go through the system here. And I don't think they have posted at least 20 of my letters."

"He was up one day, and down the next," said a friend of Carr's in prison, "a manic-depressive." Some days he would ask to be locked in solitary confinement because he didn't trust "Hispanics" and was tired of being surrounded by a language he didn't understand.



The faces of war: Far left: a contra soldier; left: Vietnam vet Ed Carr, Steven's older brother.

Carr began receiving death threats, passed to him by prison guards and other inmates. In a letter to his mother, he wrote, "Just found out today I'm supposed to be shot. A guy by the name of Morgan Felipe [Felipe Vidal] who worked for the FDN and John Hull has been given orders to shoot me and Pete because we spoke out against John Hull. . . . Get me some protection." Vidal, a 35-year-old Cuban-American, who worked for Hull as a military advisor, was a veteran of the terrorist underground. His father had been assassinated in Cuba for participating in the Bay of Pigs, and according to one mercenary, Vidal had

Part of a contra encampment.



been "on a revenge gig ever since."

Meanwhile, Hull's preoccupation with the testimony by Carr and others was growing. Honey and Avirgan published the results of their investigation in Costa Rica titled *La Penca: Pastora, the Press, and the CIA*.

Hull sued for libel. But Carr agreed to testify for the reporters.

News of David's death reached Carr, deepening his fears, and increasing the importance of his interview with Miami Public Defender John Mattes. Mattes had come a long way to interview him and had brought with him an aide to Massachusetts Senator John Kerry.

Mattes had heard about Carr from Jesus Garcia, who he unsuccessfully defended against dubious gun charges. Garcia told Mattes of the U.S. government's involvement in illegal weapons and drug trafficking. Believing that Garcia's case was more than a simple weapon's issue, and realizing the politically explosive nature of these allegations, he would not let the case die. There were mercenaries in prison in Costa Rica who could verify his story, Garcia had told Mattes. And Mattes was determined to get to them.

Over the Christmas holiday, Mattes's sister, a campaign worker for Senator Kerry, put him in touch with Kerry's staff, which was looking into reports of CIA activity in Honduras. Mattes sent Kerry documents about the mercenaries in Costa Rica and their links to the White House. "These were Kerry's first witnesses who could say, 'I had weapons, I moved weapons, and I helped ship them into Central America.'" The

Senator decided to launch an investigation. On March 9, 1986, Mattes and a Kerry aide arrived in Costa Rica.

They found a frightened Carr, reluctant to speak after David's death. But after they chatted a while, Carr, relieved to find a senator's aide taking him seriously, corroborated Garcia's claims about the March 6 weapons shipment, and described the activities of Robert Owen and John Hull. Carr's having seen a large quantity of cocaine as he and other mercenaries were loading the weapons in Miami provided evidence that arms shipments were linked to cocaine traffickers. Kerry's aide copied it all down and promised an investigation.

Back in Miami, Mattes immediately contacted the

"see the inside of a grand jury room" for obstructing justice and tampering with witnesses if they refused to curtail their investigation, said Mattes. "He told us that we had done enough and that it was time to stop."

According to Mattes, Feldman was taking orders from a higher-up. "He told me on two occasions, 'The Justice Department is just not interested in the March 11 weapons shipment.'"

Meanwhile, in Washington, Kerry's requests for power from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to launch an investigation and protect his witnesses, including Steven Carr, were turned down by the committee. Justice Department, CIA, and State Department officials called his witnesses "liars" and according to Jonathan Winer, a Kerry aide, said they "couldn't be trusted because they were in jail."

But two weeks later, Feldman and Currier flew down to Costa Rica to interview Carr. According to Carr, Feldman badgered him into waiving his rights. "Feldman said 'Here, sign this.' And I said, 'What is it?' He said, 'This acknowledges that you were read your rights and that you don't want an attorney present.' I said, 'Well, yeah, I do want an attorney.' He said, 'I didn't come 2,000 miles and waste all this money and time to have you tell me this. If you don't talk right now, we'll have you in federal prison, and you'll face up to 20 years.' I told him everything. And finally he asked a whole lot about John Hull." He said, "Have you ever been in John Hull's house?" I said, "Yeah," and drew him a floor plan of the house. I was a carpenter. I can draw floor plans. And he was upset about that."

After Carr's brutal year in prison (without a trial), money his family had sent for bail through the American Embassy finally reached him. As he prepared to leave La Reforma on Thursday, May 15, 1986, Carr was being pulled in two directions: facing a subpoena to testify at the Hull libel trial, and a request that he appear at the U.S. Embassy from Consul General Kirk Kotula. Fearful of leaving the prison alone, Carr arranged for Honey to pick him up. But as he emerged from the prison carrying his only possession, a small television set, he found there had been a mix-up and Honey was nowhere to be found. He searched the street frantically, but saw no sign of her, and then began walking quickly while trying to hail a cab.

Carr bartered the TV for a cab ride to the U.S. Embassy in San José. There, he had a tense meeting with embassy officials John Jones and Jim Nagel. According to Carr, they said he didn't have to honor the subpoena to testify in the Hull libel trial and encouraged him to co-operate with Hull. Jones even phoned Hull from the office, but Carr refused to speak with his former commander. "There was no way I was going near John Hull." The embassy officials concluded that Carr had better leave town. Confused, Carr said he needed time to think.

Carr spent Saturday and Sunday at Honey and Avirgan's house on the outskirts of San José, and spent the night with a new girlfriend.

The trial was scheduled to start on Thursday, May 22, at an old colonial courthouse in San José. On Monday morning Carr went to the embassy. "Before the talk about me getting out of Costa Rica was hypothetical," said Carr. Now the embassy increased the pressure. Jones gave him a U.S. embassy identification form to replace his passport confiscated after he was arrested, and told him to take a bus to the border and cross over into Panama.

"Go to the embassy in Panama," Carr said Jones told him. "Everybody's alerted in the whole area. You'll be put on an airplane as soon as you get to Panama." At 8:30 Carr went back to Avirgan and Honey's home, picked up some things, wrote a note saying he was going to visit a girlfriend, and left.

At 7:30 Tuesday morning, Carr was on a bus heading to the border.

Carr began receiving death threats passed to him by prison guards and other inmates.

FBI: "I literally left the airport, picked up my car, and went to see Kevin Currier at the FBI." But Mattes was in for a surprise. "There I am, saying, 'Kevin, I've got some really important stuff to talk to you about.' And he's saying, 'You've got to wait, I've got to finish this report on you. Washington wants it, I've got to telex it to Washington.'"

Mattes was shocked to find out that the FBI was investigating him. Currier refused to tell Mattes why, and the two argued over the FBI's refusal to take seriously Mattes's evidence from Costa Rica. "I told 'em, 'Look you guys, you got to do your job. This is not just a bunch of cowboys shooting up the jungle! This is people talking about \$10,000 a month from the NSC, tons of weapons being shipped to the contras, and people flying in and out of Washington on a monthly basis.'"

Two days later, Mattes and his investigator, Ralph Maestri, were called to a meeting with Currier and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeff Feldman, who had prosecuted Garcia. Feldman grilled them about their sources in the media, which mercenaries they had talked to, and then told them to "get out" and "stay out" of the investigation. He told them they would

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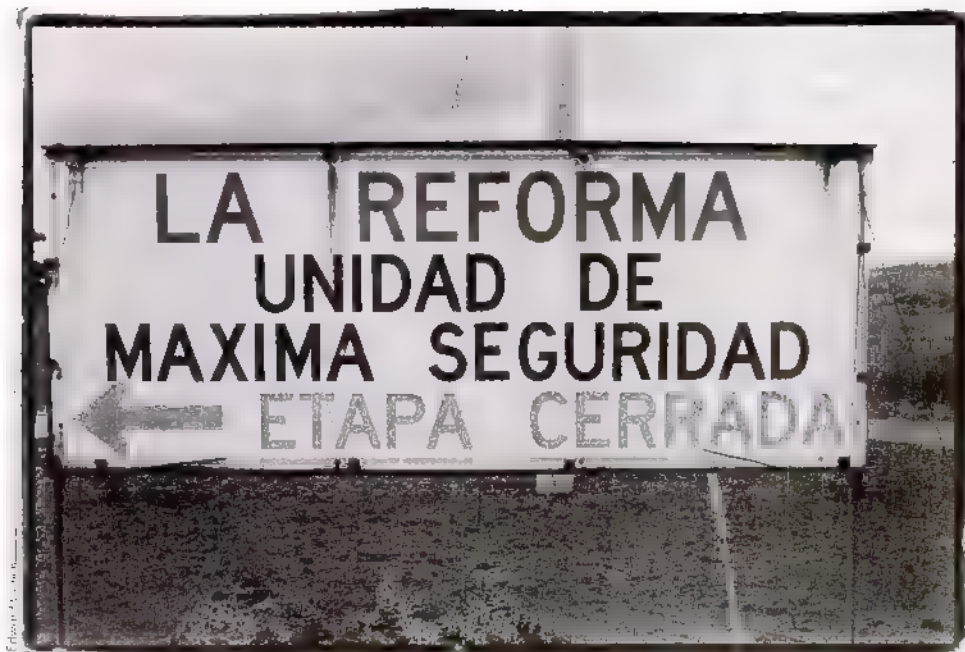
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"When I reached Pasa Canales on the Panamanian border, I called the embassy from a restaurant. I made about 15 calls to them, trying to figure out what the hell is going on. And I said, 'Look, this isn't like you said it was. Yeah, you cross the street and you're in Panama, but they got big immigration buildings right there.'"

Carr finally crossed into Panama, but ten miles down the road, he arrived at another border check.

"I show 'em my Merchant Marine card. No good. They bring me back to the border and they are going to throw me in jail. So I told the police, 'Look, here,' and I wrote CIA on the back of a piece of paper. 'Do you know what that means?' I said. And someone said, 'Yeah, yeah.' And we went up to his office."

Carr got himself out of the jam by giving the official Jones's name and number. Jones had created a cover story for Carr if he needed it. Carr had gotten off a ship, was ripped off, and now needed to get into Panama to catch another ship. It was almost good enough for the Panamanians. They also wanted a bribe of \$300, and Carr, with \$40 in his pocket, was stuck again. "I ran back to the same restaurant in Costa Rica and called up the embassy in a panic."

Carr spent Tuesday night in the hotel above the restaurant. Later, while he was in the restaurant, Jones called and said, "Get the hell out of Costa Rica. Martha Honey is raising hell. The balloon went up. Everybody's worried. Where are you physically? Are you on Costa Rican soil?" When I said, 'Yeah,' he said, 'Get the hell over to Panama. Stand over there 'cause they're gonna eventually let you in, as soon as the embassy of the United States gets ahold of the immigration chief.'

"All day Wednesday, I tried reaching the embassy in Panama." Finally, everyone decided that Carr should turn himself in to the Panamanian officials. With that, Carr had made it across the border to Panama.

Carr spent Thursday in Panama City in jail. That same morning, in a courtroom in San José, Carr was called to testify in the Hull case. Defense attorney Oto Castro rose from his seat and carried Carr's bags to the bench and placed them before the judge. "We are unable to produce him," said Castro, "but we can produce his clothing."

"The clerk of the court," said Avirgan, "stood up and said she had been assured by both the U.S. embassy and people at Hull's farm that Carr was okay, and that he would come to no harm and appear at the trial." Hull's attorney presented a notarized, sworn statement by Carr rescinding everything he had said about Hull. The judge rejected it. "I want the person," said the judge, "not a piece of paper."

On Friday, the judge ruled Hull's charges of libel were without merit.

Carr was unaware of the verdict as he boarded Bolivian Air Flight 7 for Miami at 1 A.M. on Saturday, May 24. As he entered the terminal at Miami International, he looked around nervously. While in prison he had been told that Felipe Vidal would be waiting for him at the airport. Carr was also expecting to be arrested by the FBI for having violated his parole by going to Costa Rica. Now, as he made his way to customs, Carr decided that the only way to get out of the airport alive was to turn himself in to the authorities.

After imprisonment at La Reforma and a frantic flight across Costa Rica, the air-conditioned Collier County jail in Naples, Florida, just a few miles from his home, seemed a safehouse to Carr. He had won his bet with Mattes, who had promised to buy him a six-pack if he ever got out of Costa Rica alive. Given a choice by the prosecutor, he decided to serve a six-month jail sentence rather than live under the constricting terms of his probation for several more years. Television appearances and the anticipation of testifying before Congress kept his spirits high. Indeed, he had achieved a new status, a bit of fame.

Just after midnight on November 16, Carr was released from prison.

Hurriedly, as if time were running out, Carr stuffed coins in the pay phone at Miami airport and called Mattes. Perspiration broke out on his forehead. "I'm going to L.A. to hide under a rock and lay low," he told Mattes. There were at least two good reasons for him to leave town as quickly as possible. He believed he was still being sought by the local drug dealer he

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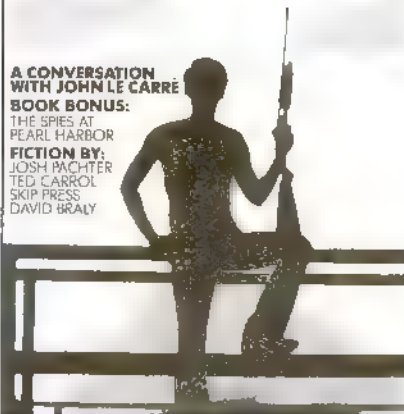
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ANTIHERO

Budd Schulberg (screenwriter of *On the Waterfront*) created Sammy Glick as a symbol of the ruthless, doublecrossing climber. He didn't intend for him to become a folk hero. But then he didn't anticipate the Boesky generation.

When I first brought *What Makes Sammy Run?* to my publisher, Sammy's chances for enduring fame, on a scale of one to ten, seemed to hover around zero. Publisher Bennett Cerf warned me to expect the worst. Even if I enjoyed good reviews, he said, its chances for commercial success were virtually nil.

"The problem is that people who read novels have no interest in Hollywood, and the people who go to movies don't read books," Cerf pontificated.

But the book took off in a way none of us had foreseen. In Hollywood it was the *succès scandale* my veteran producer/father had feared. "You'll never work in this town again," he had written me after reading it. "How will you live?" From the moment the book dared show its face in Hollywood bookstore windows, I was marked "Traitor." Sam Goldwyn, literally turning purple with anger, fired me. The ultimate blow came from the Tycoon of Tycoons, Hollywood's Boss of Bosses, L.B. Mayer of MGM. At a meeting of the Motion Picture Producers' Association, L.B. turned on my father, "B.P., how could you let your own flesh and blood write such a book?"

My career might have been over and I would have been down and out in Beverly Hills, had not the perception of Sammy Glick by the critics and the public been far broader and deeper than I could have anticipated. I had written about Sammy Glick because I had been brought up among Sammy Glicks, and I had used Hollywood as a background because Hollywood was my hometown.

But the Sammy Glick I had described was not linked only to Hollywood hucksterism. *The New York Times Book Review* welcomed him to the select company of American antiheroes from Simon Legree to Babbitt. In the opinion of Damon Runyon, I had created "the all-American heel." Sammy Glick was described as "aggression personified," a "conquistador from the gutter." In time, Sammy Glick was to creep into the language, and even into some dictionaries. A "Sammy" might



Michael Koro

become rich, powerful, and famous, but you wouldn't want him to marry your daughter. In fact, you wouldn't want to turn your back on him for fear he'd cop your watch, your story, your company, your wife, your life.

I had touched a nerve—not a Hollywood nerve, not a Jewish nerve, but something flawed and dangerous in our national character—some upside-downing of the Golden Rule that resulted in its brutal opposite: "Do it to him before he does it to me!"

That was Sammy's compulsive creed, that was his pirate's flag, that's what made him—in the words of one reader—"part of the established folklore of America."

Dr. Franz Alexander, head of the Psychoanalytical Institute at the University of Chicago, in his provocative book *The Age of Unreason*, thought he had found his answer to Sammy's running in his being the ultra-aggressive, ruthless, and belligerently self-centered type rather common among second-generation Americans from impoverished immigrant families, where the father has lost his prestige due to his inability to cope with his

new environment.

But was the Sammy Glick syndrome really limited to children of impoverished immigrants? Alexander had diagnosed the disease as *Detribalization*. The son has lost respect for his father's (tribal) values, but has yet to be affected by the mores of his adopted culture. So he is left and lost in a moral no-man's-land.

But Sammy drew mail from all over the country—from insurance companies in Hartford, chain stores in the South, mail-order houses in the Midwest—people writing that I must have known their mail-room boy, who had run over their backs to become office manager, and in some cases company president. Teenage white boys in Atlanta, third-generation sons of the middle-class in Boston, every ethnic group, geographical area, and economic strata seemed to have a Sammy. He was not from Rivington Street alone, or from Sunset and Vine. He was made in America.

But in the early '70s I began to feel the first disturbing shift in what was to become a 180-degree turn in attitude toward Sammy. Following a talk I had just given at a local college

on the impact of success on American writers, a young man came up to thank me for creating Sammy Glick. "He's a great character. I love him. I felt a little nervous about going out into the world and making it. But reading *Sammy* gives me confidence. I read it over and over. It's my Bible." He put out his hand, the hand that would soon be knifing friends and colleagues in the back. As I took it, hesitatingly, I asked myself, What have I done? Or what has a changing, greedier, more cynical America done to Sammy Glick? Now, all the young people in college reading a new edition of *What Makes Sammy Run?* were reacting to him as if he were a positive guide to their onward and upward futures. The book I had written as an angry exposé was becoming a reference manual: How to succeed in America when really trying!

What had happened, of course, is that we had left the '60s behind, with its hippies and flower children and their communal dream of sharing and loving, and had moved on to the Nixon generation, the Bebe Rebozo generation of deal-makers and Do-It-To-Them-Before-They-Do-It-To-Us. In that context, the Watergate break-in was no accident, nor was Attorney General Mitchell's Glickish boast, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Nor the blanket apology for immoral acts or amoral behavior, "Everybody does it."

No, not everybody does it, conscience and social responsibility are still alive, if not too well, in America. But the dramatic transformation of Sammy Glick into the role-model hero of the Yuppies of the '80s, is a painful reminder of the moral breakdown we are suffering without even seeming to realize that suffering is involved.

This is a new nation created in ambivalence, with idealistic individuality contending with selfish individualism from the very beginning: the democratic dream vs. the autocratic reality of hard money and the bank; social justice vs. a narrow interpretation of Law and Order.

Individualism run rampant, an arrogant disregard for the views and

continued on p. 81

Column by Budd Schulberg

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Is Tracey Ullman Pee-wee's U.K. cousin?

ANGLO FILE

Interview by Glenn O'Brien

Tracey Ullman is a very funny girl even though she's English. In England she's a famous show business personality. She's sort of like their Lucille Ball, Carol Burnett, Patty Duke, and Gidget rolled into one. She had a huge big hit TV show and a huge big hit record album. And being the most popular thing in England she did the logical thing: she moved to Hollywood where nobody had ever heard of her. There she was discovered by James Brooks, famous *Mary Tyler Moore Show* director (among other important gigs), who decided to fill the void in America's heart left by *Mare, Lou, Mur, Ted*, and gang, with Tracey and her gang. And Tracey may be just the right thing for the times—sort of halfway between Mary Richards and Pee-wee Herman.

You may have seen Tracey Ullman, who is not related to Liv Ullman, on the David Letterman show, where she has been a popular guest, ranking among the Top 40 in *Guests Dave Has Been Nice To*. If you want to check out Tracey Ullman, the rock star, look for her delightful album *You Broke My Heart in 17 Places* (Stiff/MCA Records, 1983) at your local new wave antiques shop. And look for *The Tracey Ullman Show* on your local Fox Network tube stop. It debuts on April 5, and then goes weekly for 26 episodes. It should be cool, considering the talent involved: some of the best comedy dudes in the trade and animation by Matt "Life in Hell" Groening, and Tracey herself, who is sharp as a frozen porcupine and a lot better looking.

Anyway, we called Tracey up on the phone to find out about her new show and she talked to us about that and her new life in Hollywood from the edge of her spleen-shaped swimming pool.

TRACEY: It's not a sitcom—that horrible term—or a sketch show. We're trying to get in the middle. So it's a variety show and half of it is like a playlet with a complete story, then a few sketches, some animation, some chat at the end. I'm not going to do stand-up comedy. I hate that

syndrome. I think they're very brave, but I'm not going to do that "Where you from?" stuff with the audience. We'll try to chat about something else in a very un-stand-up way.

I like Pee-wee's *Playhouse* and I like Gary Shandling very much and I like David Letterman. These are the things that have impressed me in your country. I like *Cheers* and I like *Buffalo Bill*, but they cancelled that. *Family Ties* is the most hysterical thing on American television. That's a bit sad, isn't it? They show that in the children's hour. It's good, I'm not knocking it. But I think we can do a little more adult stuff on the telly. Don't you?

GLENN: I don't know.

TRACEY: You don't watch? Oh, you're a big trendy boy who lives in a loft, aren't you.

GLENN: No, I live in Brooklyn. I watch TV.

TRACEY: What do you watch?

GLENN: I watch Pee-wee, basketball, baseball, Dave. I watch *Magnum PI* every night at six.

TRACEY: You watch that? I never watched that. Is that a good show?

GLENN: Yeah!

TRACEY: There seem to be endless *MacGyvers* out there and *Heart of the City* and all this sort of stuff. I never, ever watch them. I haven't got the patience to sit through them. At the beginning someone gets shot and in the middle they're all in this hospital and in the end the couple gets reunited and it's all right anyway. Or they die and Michael Landon, who's an angel, brings them back to life.

GLENN: I never realized that I was sort of dependent on television until I went to England and found myself watching these guys drink beer and play snooker on TV at midnight. There's nothing on there when you really want to watch it.

TRACEY: We've got Channel 4 now! We've got *Lesbian Rock-Climbing Weekly* in prime time. We're trying. Snobby Americans at my husband's golf club are always saying, "Of course your BBC is so marvelous. We have nothing to compare with that here." We have a lot of rubbish on the telly. Our sitcoms all have these silly upper-

moving images



Aaron Rappaport/ONYX

class women expecting the vicar to arrive. Everyone speaks like Princess Diana or Sarah Ferguson. It's all terribly, terribly posh. Or else Benny Hill girls with flashes of tit.

I grew up with *I Love Lucy* and *Bewitched* and Ernie Kovacs and I loved it. That's a lot of my inspiration. My English show wasn't late-night TV as it tends to be in England—an anarchic sketches where you stab factory dummies—and it wasn't kid stuff either. It struck that happy medium that television bosses desire.

GLENN: Then you made a record.

TRACEY: I made that as a bit of a lark really. I can hold a note and hold a tune and it was good fun. But it was a joke that became successful. It was the old Midas touch. I was doing everything. When I go into record stores I always look for it in the bargain bins.

GLENN: Are you homesick for England?

TRACEY: No. I get things sent over. I get tapes sent over all the time. I keep up with all the bands. And I love it when I see them coming here on MTV, giving interviews: "Yeah, you

got Reagan in the White House. You got no idea!" Yeah, shut up. Be here for two years and you'll be screaming through an episode of *Love Boat*, you silly anarchic left-wing boys. I love to see the English pop stars fresh off the 747. They take the piss out of you and you Americans pretend you don't understand but you really think we're all silly, going on about your corrupt society. I'd love to see what this Red Wedge, this left-wing thing we've got in England, is going to do when the Labor Government does get in and they have to pay 96 percent tax. They'll be screaming for their condos in Palm Springs. It gets me too. Here they are in New York, having a ball making records, and they're on MTV speaking for these poor kids in Newcastle with no money. It's very political at the moment to be in show business in England.

Well, Tracey, thanks babe. That's all we have time for tonight. But be sure to watch for *The Tracey Ullman Show* on your local Joan Rivers Network station.

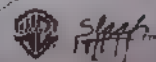


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STAND UP

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PRODUCED BY MITCHELL FROOM

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TOTALLY



In the past, it would have been difficult to get any rock star to make an anti-drug commercial. But as rock 'n' roll itself becomes more mainstream, so the image of the rock star has shed its traditional antisocial trappings. The Rock Against Drugs program takes this one step further—its 30-second TV spots elevate the rock performer to the status of role model for young people.

RAD was created by Danny Goldberg (record company prez, rock manager), Michael Des Barres (the cool kid with the granny glasses in *To Sir With Love*, and sometime rock star) and the California attorney general. MTV donated creative assistance and \$3 million worth of free air time. The first series of spots started airing last November with a broad range of stars issuing warnings in different ways. So far, there have been nice-guy teen idols like Jon Bon Jovi

and excruciatingly generic musos, like one of the guys from Mister Mister. But there have also been some less obvious people, such as Gene Simmons (who formerly stuck his tongue out for a living) and Motley Crüe's Vince Neil, who has an attitude to match his leather trousers. The spot with a real feel of honesty, however, is by Steve Jones. Yeah, that Steve Jones, once of the Sex Pistols—four guys you definitely would not have lent your house keys. He talks about how his friend Sid died from drugs and "I nearly died from drugs. Drugs suck." It's to the point. And it looks like he means it.

A second wave of RAD public service announcements is on its way. Lightweights such as Belinda Carlisle, the Bangles, Dennis de Young, and the Zappa youngsters are scheduled, as are the Fabulous Thunderbirds and Michael

Des Barres. Perhaps the greatest casting coup, though, is the recruitment of Lou Reed, an artist once synonymous with drug culture.

But will the kids swallow it? Or will they think the stars are wussies for doing 'em? "I must confess that when I made a commitment to do these, in January of '86, the media climate was quite different than it is today," says Danny Goldberg. "I'm uneasy about the overkill of anti-drug messages, because there may be kids out there who will just get resentful. But I do believe that those of us in show business and the rock business affect style, and what's hip and stylish can change the way people behave. When you're in a business that's in the public eye, you want to send out the best possible vibes on any given range of issues."

—Karen McBurnie

L-R: Ex-Sex (& drugs) Pistol Steve Jones, fashion victim Andy Taylor, and Gene Simmons tell you it's okay to rock 'n' roll all night but not party every day.



STILLS

The movie of **Bright Lights, Big City** is finally ready to roll with Sydney Pollack (*Out of Africa*) producing and Michael J. Fox (heartthrob) starring. ■ The movie version of **Less Than Zero**, its wimp California counterpart, is still stalled. SPIN nominates Julian Lennon to play the lead. ■ Russell Mulcahy, best known for shooting Duran Duran's videos, has been hired to direct **Rambo III**. So far the film is notable for having the shortest story synopsis in history: "Rambo's back." On the left coast, they call this low-concept. ■ Oliver Stone is back writing with Richard Boyle, co-author and model for the hero of **Salvador**. "Boyle is an asshole and a scrounge-bag, but that's basically why I like him," explains Stone. ■ Tom Waits has joined Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep in **Ironweed**, based on William Kennedy's novel. The release of his new LP has consequently been pushed back to September. ■ **Watchmen**, the comic-book saga by left-hand-of-God Alan Moore, has been bought by 20th Century Fox. No shooting schedule yet. ■ **Blue Velvet** bombed in France; **Over the Top** has taken Japan by storm. No wonder market analysts develop ulcers. ■ **Tougher Than Leather**, Rick Rubin's bloody revenge drama starring Run of D.M.C., has completed shooting. Look for a summer release. ■ Mother-and-daughter country act the Judds are filming a TV sitcom pilot. It's about a mother and her daughters living in Hollywood and trying to keep traditional morals. ■ Michael Stipe makes his acting debut in **Arena Brains**, a 30-minute video production written by Richard Price and directed by artist Robert Longo. It's described as a fantasy about a man who gets tired of watching TV and goes out to buy a sandwich. Andy Warhol did not die in vain. ■ Bo Derek's next film is titled **A Knight of Love**. Personally, we're more excited by the forthcoming release of Titan Films' **Assault of the Killer Bimbos**.



Making a case for
white rock: Billy
Duffy (left) and Ian
Astbury of the Cult.

London. November, 1985. We're in a cab. Rick's happy. He's played me the Big Audio Dynamite remixes. He's driven everyone crazy by playing me Slayer tracks right in the middle of a Whodini recording session. Now he's on the way to Bond Street for the first business call of the day, a do-it-our-way-or-not-at-all showdown with CBS Records. CBS has just recently made a licensing and distribution deal with Def Jam, the label that Rick and his partner Russell Simmons run out of New York. But CBS doesn't quite know what to make of Def Jam—they're not sure if it's a dance label, a hip-hop label, a marginal novelty label, whatever. Rick thinks it's a mainstream pop label. But CBS isn't sure about Rick Rubin, either.

The way Rick sees it, this is one of a number of things about London that's slightly off. The previous night he'd been at a party for 4th and Broadway, the soul music division of Island Records. With its roster of American and British black music acts, 4th and Broadway is right on line with the current drift of British youth culture, in which the soul boy rules. A response to the way in which black music fans were ostracized in the '70s, soul boy is a messianic sort of movement. If it had a TV show, it would encourage viewers to touch the screen to be saved. And since it's the hippest thing going in England, it's a market that CBS thinks Def Jam should target. Rick is confused by the party. Dressed in his customary black leather and denim, with his long brown hair and beard, he looks out of place, like he just hitchhiked a ride out of some heavy metal enclave and wound up in the wrong joint. "Nobody in this country likes rock," he laments on his way out.

Later that night, Rick discovers Alice in Wonderland, an advance-guard, scouting-party kind of club for London's growing psychedelic underground. In particular, Alice in Wonderland celebrates that moment in history when late-hippie mysticism solidified into early-'70s progressive rock. That's the main reason why, when we're in the cab, Rick's happy. "It's the best," he enthuses. And when Rick enthuses, it becomes possible to catch a glimpse of the future course of popular music: Run-D.M.C., the Beastie Boys, Juice, L.L. Cool J, Chuck Stanley, and so on. Back then, I did predict that rappers and hard rockers would work together. I didn't predict the Cult.

Sixteen months after that cab ride, I'm watching the Cult have their picture taken. Being around the Cult is like walking round a house with old floorboards. All that leather—it creaks. Guitarist Billy Duffy has dyed blond hair with the roots heavily featured and a black zipper jacket advertising Vietnam; the Cult have recently become Platoon fans. Singer Ian Astbury wears a fur hat with tails, and a death's-head pallor. His

white knees stick out of the slashes in his leather legwear.

White rock: it's ironic really. When punk arrived, a certain type of rock—whether Led Zeppelin or Yes—became profoundly unfashionable. Gradually, as is inevitable with any dogmatism toward history, there came a growing recognition and reclamation of the past. First Roxy Music and Marc Bolan and Bowie, then hardbop jazz from the heyday of Blue Note, salsa, '60s soul, disco, you name it. The one thing you can guarantee in Britain is that a trend in one direction instantly creates its opposite—the trend that will kill it off. So eventually it had to happen: paleface rock is on the comeback trail with the Cult and Rick Rubin, the new Tycoon of Teen, riding at the head of the column.

"All rock means to us is good white music," says Ian Astbury. "I'm not saying we're knocking black artists or anything like that. We're just saying that that's what we've been brought up with. White melodies. White electric guitars."

"We just ain't funky dudes," says Billy Duffy in his Manchester accent. This is Billy's moment of confession; he looks like he's lost sleep over it these past few years. "Finally, I'm just totally proud of the music I listen to—of not going through life embarrassed and really wishing I'd listened to James Brown records when I was 14. I'm very happy I used to listen to Led Zeppelin."

Rick Rubin is one man who has no time for these neurotic crises. The first time I meet him, back in February '85, I'm pinned to the wall first by L.L. Cool J and the Beastie Boys, then AC/DC. Loud. In Rick's world, you're either On or you're Off. "I think the way to know what's really going on is just being in tune with everything," he says. "You can't do it by listening to music. Pro wrestling is real important. Movies. You know, everything. You have to make records the way you live your life."

Just over one year ago, the Cult were touring Canada. They had come out of the underground post-punk scene and to the people who weren't their fans they looked like they were headed nowhere fast. They had been Southern Death Cult, then Death Cult, and now the Cult.

What was left: The? Cult? Oblivion? They had been burdened with spearheading quite a few of the transitory style armies. Psychedelic was the latest one. Turn on, tune in, drop out—except this time around there was nothing to drop out of.

"We were given a tape by a DJ friend of ours in Toronto," says Astbury, thoughtfully smothering a ringing telephone with his fringed leather jacket. "It had this Beastie Boys stuff on it. We didn't know who the Beastie Boys were. We didn't know who Rick Rubin was. We just heard this sound—boom/ kkkhh/boom/ kkkhh. An amazing drum sound with, like, Led Zeppelin, AC/DC mixed over the top and these other guitars added. We thought that was just

Rick Rubin, the Def Jam golden boy, leads the Cult's quest to reinvent progressive rock.

THE CULT

Article by David Toop

Photography by Ken Nahoum

such a basic raw sound, really exciting and stimulating.

The complication was that this new teenage rebel music recognized few racial boundaries. Up in Canada, the Cult took apart some of their own prejudices. "At that point," says Astbury, "it was too much for us to take in. For one thing it was from America, and then it had hip hop in it. We could relate to the rock part of it, but we couldn't relate to the . . ."

"Rapping," says Billy Duffy.

"After a while," Astbury continues, "it grew on us so much and we thought, you know, this is the direction for us. Then when we heard the Aerosmith thing it just made so much sense."

The Cult management contacted Rubin in New York. It took just one telephone call to establish rapport. They met in New York, sitting around a loft, all fans together, talking records and videos. "It was like being 14 again," says Astbury, "when you used to sit around playing records at your mate's house going, 'This is wonderful, listen to this.' It was amazing."

The group had already begun work on a new album. Its predecessor, *Love*, had fared reasonably well and yielded "She Sells Sanctuary," an anthemic rock single that seemed to have been born from the late nights Ian and Billy had spent at Alice in Wonderland. Their feelings on how to proceed were clear enough. They wanted to make a break from '80s production values. Back to basics. "I think people have been waiting for that stripped-down sound for quite a while," says Astbury.

"The beat." That's Billy's summation. "Rhythm. Basic function." "After punk rock," adds Ian, "all that seemed to happen was that people felt that to sell records they had to use grandiose productions. The actual character of the individual musicians went out of it. Nothing stood out." The Frankie Goes to Hollywood syndrome, Duffy calls it. The production greater than the song. The old records that the Cult like maintained the qualities of the song and the musicianship. "You don't remember them for this amorphous wall of sludge that hits you with thousands of things, bombarding your senses. The drum kit sounds like a drum kit rather than an explosion in a mountain."

Still, it doesn't matter how many times you read *Hammer of the Gods* or woodshed with a can of beer and copies of early Zeppelin, AC/DC, or Motörhead records. Any number of stories about John Bonzo Bonham's drunken adventures won't help you actually achieve that "Dazed and Confused" sound. So the Cult made their new album more or less the same way they made the previous one. They played it to Rick. Too much going on, he said. With Rick there's no halfway. His initial role as a remixer expanded as he directed a remake of the entire LP in Jimi Hendrix's old studio, Electric Lady, in New York. The first attempt was junked. After moments of panic, the management and record company saw that this drastic volte-face was indeed the stairway to heaven. They were, in fact, ecstatic, says Billy Duffy.

So they should be. The first single from *Electric*, "Love Removal Machine," is a winner. "Bay-be, bay-be, bay-be, bay-be, bay-be, bay-be, bay-be, bay-be" sings Ian Astbury, just like Robert Plant. Robert actually dropped by at the sessions. "You're a good singer," he said; "keep it up." Ian was thrilled. Thanks to Rick, what the group knew they wanted is now a reality. Not too many effects, not too much reverb, dry voices, no multilayered guitars. "All playing with headphones on in the old-fashioned way, all at once in a room for real," says Billy Duffy.

In a sense, it is perfect. Marshall amps in the video, long hair, no boogie fixation or fake country, no L.A. snare drums, no boys dressed like girls, no Death Race 2000 Nazi Rockabilly Outer Space Punk con-



Rick Rubin, Cult hero and the new *Tycoon* of *Teen*: "You can't just listen to music. Pro wrestling is real important."

cepts. Most of the radio and TV jocks genuinely dislike it, so that brings the generation gap back. It's too much like bad memories to attract anything but the newest, the greenest of the hip crowd. It's not bar-band, pub rock nostalgia, neither is it druggy gothic or here today/gone tomorrow acid rock. It's not sub-cultural heavy metal, either. If anything, it's music about heavy metal. Just watch it go.

"We just ain't funky dudes," says Billy Duffy. He looks like he's lost sleep over it these past few years.



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After he talked to reporters, contra commander John Hull's personal assistant, David, was kidnapped, tortured and reportedly killed.

NICARAGUA continued from p. 69

had ripped off. The second reason was Vidal.

Carr's fears were not unfounded. In October, the downing of the C-123 cargo plane carrying Eugene Hasenfus suddenly cast a spotlight on covert arms operations and made almost a certainty governmental investigations into violations of the Boland Amendment and the Neutrality Act, which bars U.S. citizens from taking up arms against a country with which the U.S. is at peace. Carr was also expected to testify in a racketeering case brought by Honey and Avirgan against Owen, Hull, Jones, and 26 others for their alleged involvement in the La Penca bombing and was likely to be a witness before a Miami grand jury that would hear testimony about the March 6 weapons shipment.

Carr hung up with Mattes and by 4:30 A.M., he was on a flight to Los Angeles. From the L.A. airport, he headed north through dense traffic into the San Fernando Valley to Van Nuys, a suburb crowded with condominiums. Carr rented a modest room on Cerdos Drive in a neighborhood that was worlds away from Costa Rica.

The house belonged to Jacqueline Scott, a close friend of his 37-year-old sister, Linda Nichols, who lived nearby. Carr found work as a carpenter, but any hope of a normal life was shattered as the investigations in Washington and Miami gained momentum. But Kerry's attempts to hold hearings were being thwarted by the Republican-dominated Foreign Relations Committee, so he couldn't provide Carr protection. So in L.A., Steven Carr hid in his new home, rarely went out, and kept the doors locked and the lights on at all times.

At 10 P.M. on Friday, December 12, Carr returned home in good spirits, having spent the evening in a San Diego bar with Scott's son Ricky Perry. He talked

with Scott's daughter, Jackie Perry, for about 45 minutes, and then got her a blanket because she was cold. Then he said goodnight, and went upstairs to his bedroom.

At about 3:30 A.M., Jackie was awakened by loud noises and the sounds of banging against the downstairs wall. She found Steven staggering around. He asked her to help him open the door, but instead she went upstairs to wake her mother.

When they returned, they found him outside, sprawled on the driveway, writhing and gasping for air. They attempted to lift Carr and drag him into the house, but his legs locked in a sitting position. Perry called for an ambulance.

"I panicked out, I ate the whole thing," Scott told police Carr said. Soon after the ambulance arrived, Carr began losing consciousness. The 27-year-old adventurer was dead before they could put him in the ambulance.

The L.A. police who were called to the scene had no idea Carr was a witness in a federal suit. Assuming the cause of his death to be a routine cocaine overdose, or perhaps a suicide, they left the Scott home without searching for clues.

Ed Carr heard about Steven's death from his sister Linda a few hours later. She said that Scott's daughter had seen him swallow three small plastic bags of cocaine. But on Sunday, the autopsy results from the L.A. coroner's office disproved that. No traces of cocaine could be found in Carr's throat and no plastic was found in his stomach.

Meanwhile, Dan Sheehan, an attorney handling the Honey-Avirgan suit, was alarmed. He had contacted the FBI on Saturday to inform them that the dead man was an important federal witness whose death should be investigated for possible homicide. But the FBI still insisted that the dead man was not a witness.



On Wednesday, Sheehan discovered that Ronald Kornblum, the L.A. coroner, had not been notified by the LAPD or FBI that Carr was a federal witness who had received death threats.

"Kornblum got all panicky since the body had already been released." The coroner had heard rumors of Carr's case, but since he received no official word, he had sent the body on to Naples for burial.

Carr's funeral was set for Thursday. On Wednesday, Kornblum called the Naples coroner and requested a further examination. The second autopsy revealed three needle-sized puncture wounds adjacent to Carr's left elbow, an area without veins.

The marks remain a mystery. Police suggest that they could be cocaine injection sites, but tests were inconclusive. Medical experts and former addicts agree that it's illogical for an experienced cocaine user such as Carr to have mainlined the drug in the tissue near his elbow. "For one, you lose the effect of the drug by injecting it into your tissue. Secondly, it's very painful."

In January, the L.A. coroner's office released a six-page autopsy report which attributed the cause of death to an accidental cocaine overdose. Carr had three times the lethal dose of cocaine in his system when he died. The report refers to the wounds only as "pinpoint marks in surface of skin accompanied by extensive subcutaneous hemorrhage."

The LAPD suggests this is what happened: around December 6, Carr and Ricky Perry together bought an ounce of cocaine. Then, say police, Perry gave Carr the entire ounce to hold onto while he left town. Carr began using the stuff immediately, which culminated in a 56-hour binge before his death.

"It's a run-of-the-mill cocaine overdose," said LAPD Detective Mel Arnold. "It happens all the time. All that stuff about him being threatened by the CIA and the contras is all bullshit."

Ed Carr is not convinced. He began to doubt the

police version when he realized the story about swallowing the bags of cocaine was false. He is convinced that someone injected cocaine or poison into his brother.

"Either the CIA drove him to suicide or they murdered him," Ed says. "Either way they killed him, whether it was psychologically or physically, they are the ones who killed him."

Valley kids die all the time from overdosing, says Mel Arnold, and he's right. But he refuses to see that Steven Carr's death was part of a conspiracy.

John Hull's driver, David, who began talking to reporters, disappeared and may have been murdered . . . Jesus Garcia was apparently set up and arrested . . . A 105mm bomb was placed in front of Garcia's wife's home and, say demolition experts, "would have taken out the entire block had it gone off. . . ." Peter Glibbery was convicted and has spent two years in La Reforma. He was told by the British embassy not to say "another word to the press," and refused to be interviewed for this article . . . Steven Carr is dead, and police can't explain the mysterious puncture wounds on his arm.

Jack Terrell understands the nature of the situation in which Steven Carr found himself. "The closer you get to the nucleus of the power structure," he said, "the more you will see bodies washing up on shore. I know about five people like Steve Carr who I wouldn't want to be in this life, because if they are liabilities and they show up dead, it's not going to hurt anybody's feelings. They just end up a one-inch obituary in a distant memory."

Special research and editorial assistance by Connie Blitt, Robert Knight, and Julia Rosenbaum.

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A student thanked me for writing Sammy. Then he stuck out the hand that would soon be knifing friends in the back.

the welfare of our fellow man, is the root of the Iran-Contra debacle that has brought the President down from his mythological height. Small wonder in such an atmosphere that a Lt. Colonel in the Marines becomes his own CIA and State Department, wheels and deals with foreign countries, international arms dealers, Swiss bank accounts, and rebels in Miami, who dream of the good old days of Somoza while they gobble up those mysterious millions.

In the closing lines of *What Makes Sammy Run?* I had described his meteoric career as "a blueprint of a way of life that was paying dividends in America in the first half of the 20th century." Well, with our take-over artists, our inside traders, our Ollie Norths, our college football heroes on the take from filthy rich alumni, our New York City Commissioners compromised almost to a man (and woman), all signs point to even bigger dividends for the Sammy Glicks in the second half of this century, and on into the 21st.

The book I had written as an attack on antisocial behavior has become a How-To book on looking out for Number One. Change that line of the old hymn to read, "America, America, God shed His grace on me."

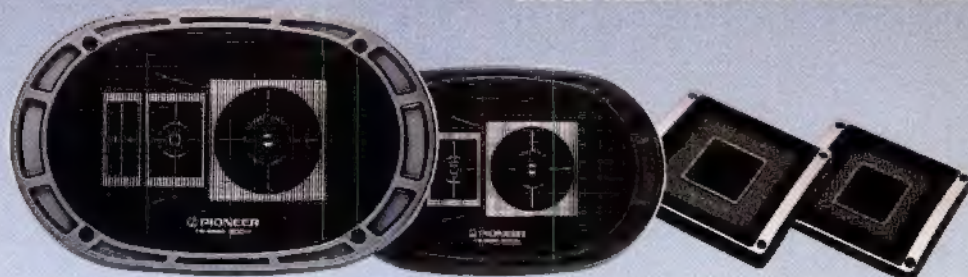
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DOWN IN JINGLELAND

Why music and vegetables don't mix.

By Brian Cullman

The first time was five years ago. The phone rang at nine in the morning.

"Mr. Cullman?"

"Mmmmm?"

"Do you think there's a problem with broccoli?"

"With broccoli?" Lester Bangs used to call me up at four and five A.M. to ask about Captain Beefheart songs or about Lou Reed's haircut. No one had ever called to ask about broccoli.

"You know, in the second verse: 'Come to the garden/and see what we mean/with lettuce and broccoli/and big lima beans.'"

"Big lima beans?" Lima beans, last time I looked, weren't all that big. We were getting into dangerous territory.

"Mr. Cullman . . . Latizia *did* call you yesterday, didn't she? I mean, she *did* call you?"

"Latizia?"

There was a long pause on the other end, and then a woman with a deep, husky voice breathed into the phone.

"Brian . . . may I call you Brian? . . . Brian, what must you think of us. My goodness, this must all be soooo confusing." She gave a short chuckle. It sounded like a horse exploding.

I was awake now. It seems that someone had given my name to an ad agency and recommended that I write the music for a public service spot on vegetables. Trying to convince kids to eat them—a bad idea, if you ask me.

"As you know we can't, ah, compensate you, ah, financially, but your song will get national exposure and be recorded for radio and television by the colored singer, Alan Green."

"Al Green? Al Green is going to sing about broccoli?"

"You know his work? We think he's very talented. He's been very helpful to the foundation."

It's moments like this that make me realize what a strange and wonderful world we're living in. I took the job on the condition that "big lima beans" be changed to "tasty green beans," a change that required four or five calls to Creative Services.

"Murray thinks your idea is sound. Frankly, 'big lima beans' always struck us as a little intimidating. Your phrase 'tasty green beans' is a bit more relaxed. You get the sense that those tasty little beans really want to be your friends. 'Tasty green beans.' Hell of a good phrase. Almost melodic. But then, you are a musician."

"Yes."

"Yes, of course. Now you know, ah, that we can't give you any, ah, credit on the lyrics."

"No, no, that's all right. Really."

"Not that we don't feel that you deserve it, mind

you. It's just that Murray worked so hard on them, and they have been copyrighted already."

"That's fine. Really."

"Just so you understand."

I'd never written music for a jingle before, but I caught on. I listened to the radio for a while, then I tried to lift bits out of songs of mine that I'd thrown away. When nothing worked, I stole a riff from an old Staple Singers song, transposed the bridge, and sent in a quick piano demo.

"We all think it's very, very good," Latizia bubbled into the phone. "First-rate work."

"Thank you."

"I played it for my daughter, she's 12, and she really liked it. Walked around the house humming it."

"Well, thank you . . ."

"No, thank you—you captured just the right spirit. You really seem to understand vegetables. Very good work. We're just so sorry that Alan's not going to be able to perform it. We all think he would have especially liked your music."

"Al Green's not going to sing it?"

"No, no. He's apparently had some sort of spiritual awakening and is just recording religious music. His manager sent in a very nice note. Said he wouldn't be able to sing about vegetables, only God."

The song was recorded by someone named Bob who had been in *Evita* and who, for a few shining moments in the late '60s, had been the voice of Tony the Tiger on Frosted Flakes commercials. I never heard



it on the radio. Latizia promised to send me a tape, but it hasn't arrived yet.

The second time was a couple of months ago. I was over at W.K. Studios making copies of a demo tape by my band, O.K. Savant, when the studio manager came by.

"Hey . . . Nico wants to talk to you."

"Nico from the Velvet Underground?"

"Different Nico. He wears plaid shirts and has a ponytail. He's a jingle producer. He has a session this afternoon and his singer cancelled at the last minute, so he's frantic. He called a few minutes ago, and your tape was playing in the background. He wants to know if you're available. He's offering \$200."

I called Nico.

"Yeah, I heard your tape over the phone, the band sounds great. I'm producing a jingle for Old Grand Dad later today, and I'd like you to sing lead on it. You've got the right sound. You know, authentic, credible. Can you come by?"

I recognized Nico with his plaid shirt and ponytail. He was standing next to the vice-president of the ad agency, a tall, gray-haired man in a dapper blue suit. He waved a Bic pen around like a little baton and addressed all his questions to me via Nico, as if, being a musician, I'd need an interpreter.

"Ask him if he can sing like Rod Stewart."

"Nope," I shook my head. "I'm not a session singer. You heard how I sing."

"He has his own style, Richard," Nico explained, rolling his eyes to indicate that he was used to working with difficult artistic types like me. "Let's see what he can do."

"What the hell," Richard stepped back into the control room, waving his Bic pen furiously. Nico handed me the lyrics:

*Reaching inside for all you've got
Putting it to use means a lot
Never satisfied with mediocrity
That's your pursuit of quality.
Using the finest that can be found
Fresh baby corn from fertile ground
As head of the family, you've done the best
Quality far above the rest.*

And on and on. I began longing for the graceful integrity of those big lima beans. I listened to the track in my headphones, all horns and strings and drum machines, cheerful and ham-fisted as a TV movie of the week theme, and I tried to sound like a man who needed a drink, who deserved a drink, who'd earned a drink, who'd done his best and was never mediocre but went out to fertilize the ground with the brave ones, the strong ones, the ones who went one to one with fresh baby corn and never looked back. I sounded like a real jerk.

I went in to listen to a playback. Nico was nodding thoughtfully while Richard banged his pen on the console.

"Jesus, his voice is really high. He sounds just like that singer on the radio."

"Who's that?" Nico asked helpfully.

"I know," Richard brightened up. "Anne Murray. He sounds just like Anne Murray."

"A manly Anne Murray," Nico stressed.

"Definitely. It's high, but it's manly." He nodded at me, as if I'd just stumbled into his field of vision. "Pretty good. Go do it again."

I did it again. And again. And again.

I left as a chunky girl in a red sweater was recording chirpy country harmonies behind the "family" section. Nico followed me to the door and gave me a check.

"Good work. We'll finish up the jingle tonight, then I'll mix tomorrow. I'll send you a tape of it for your reel."

The tape hasn't arrived yet. The check bounced. Life's a gas.